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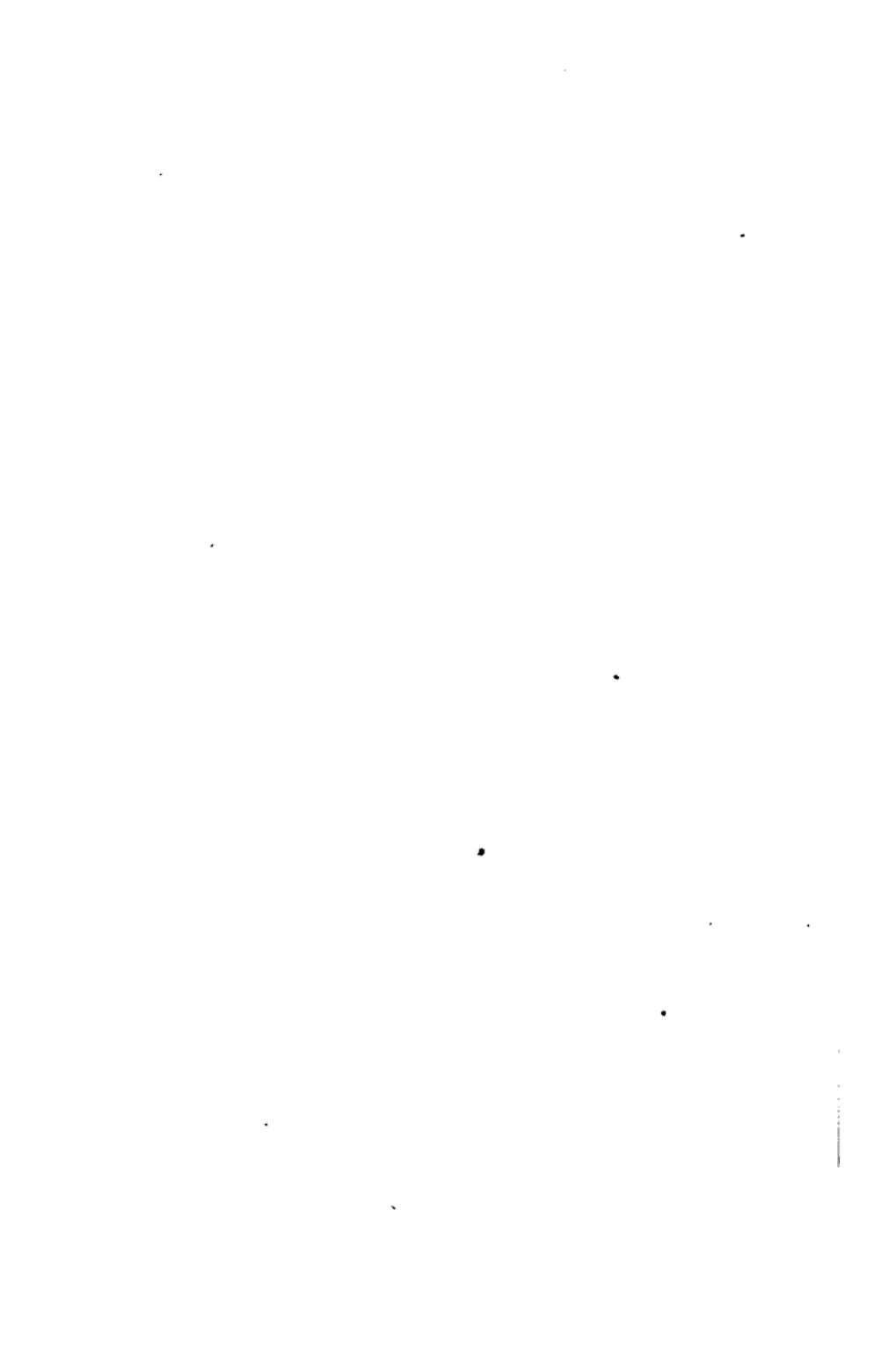
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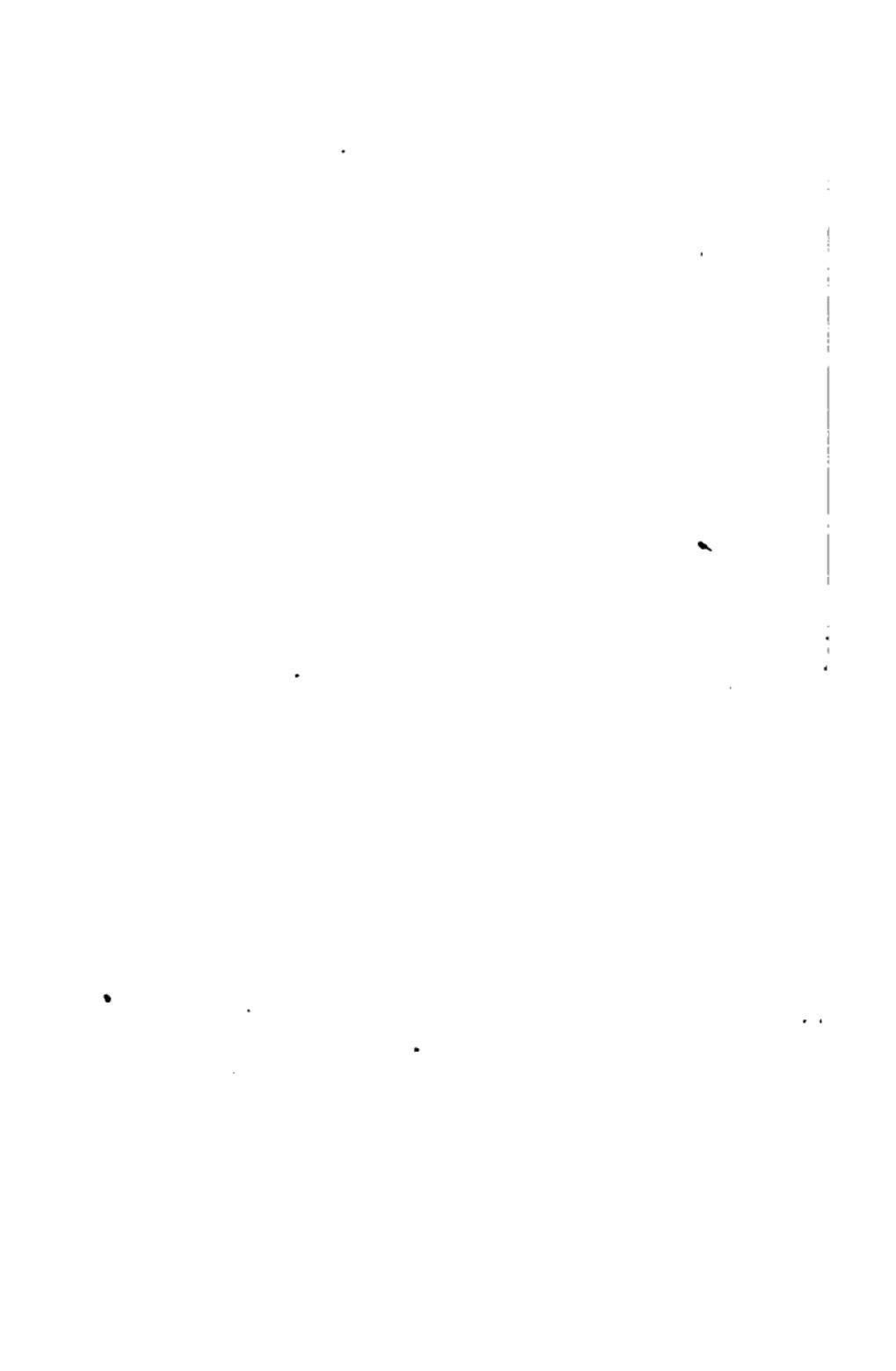
MIDSUMMER
HOLIDAYS



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MIDSUMMER HOLIDAYS

At Princes Green.

A TALE.

BY MRS. ECCLES,

AUTHOR OF "RICHES OF POVERTY."

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MIDSUMMER HOLIDAYS.

CHAPTER I.

THE RECTORY OF SS. TRYPHENA AND TRYPHOSA.

ONE of the most beautiful Churches in London is that which stands in Thornhaugh Square. It is called after two pious persons mentioned by S. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, S. Tryphena and Tryphosa ; but why these names were selected out of all those to be found in Holy Writ, is not known to us.

The parsonage house which adjoins the Church, is a spacious and comfortable dwelling, fit to be the home of a simple-hearted gentleman and his family ; and the present occupants, the Reverend Robert Besborough and his wife, have spent several happy years within its substantial walls.

Four children have been born to them during this time, the youngest of whom, little Rose, was not quite a year old last Midsummer holidays, the date to which our story refers; the next, Bob, a fine sturdy urchin full of spirit, but as gentle as strong things usually are, was then five; and Ridley and Mary twins of rather more than eleven years old.

It was a wet uncomfortable afternoon in the latter part of July, and the children who had insisted on not doing any work on the first day of Ridley's holidays, were heartily tired with playing so long indoors, and were glad when nurse's summons to the tea-table afforded them a change of amusement.

Tea, bread and butter, and seed cake, are wonderful restoratives to the jaded spirits of people of the age of the little Besboroughs, and by the time a moderate portion of these viands had been consumed, the tongues of the party recovered their activity, and merry chat enlivened with frequent peals of laughter, created a hubbub, which, the doors being open on account of the heat, might be heard even in the hall!

Probably it was this circumstance which prevented the entrance of the Rector from being noticed by his wife, who was sitting alone in the drawing room waiting his return to

dinner. Mr. Besborough let himself in by a key he carried in his pocket, and proceeding straight to the room where his wife was, found her in a position expressive of both weariness and sorrow; her head resting languidly against the back of her chair, and her eyes covered by one hand, from beneath which great tears trickled slowly down her white cheeks.

"What is the matter, little wife?" cried the Rector, shocked at the air of fatigue and suffering which he observed, "is your mother worse to-day? or has anything gone wrong with the children?"

"No, thank God, the little ones are all right," replied his wife, "my mother is not so well to-day as she has been for the last week, but the change is not great enough to be my excuse for the weakness in which you surprised me. I believe I am rather over fatigued, for I really have not energy enough to struggle for self-control just now, as I ought to do."

"You must have a little wine, Mary; lie still, my love, while I fetch some for you," said her husband. "I wish you had not waited dinner, when you needed refreshment so much, and it is so late too—but I could not get home sooner."

Mr. Besborough went for the wine, and quickly returning made his wife drink it; then sitting down beside her, drew her head to his

shoulder and passed his other hand caressingly over the rich braids of her dark hair, till soothed by his affection, she regained her composure, and began to narrate the little incidents of the day.

"And so you were in the rain again to-day, coming from that out-of-the-world village where your mother lives," said Mr. Besborough. "This is the second time you have been nearly wet through this week! We really must devise some way of putting an end to these daily journeys to and from Princes Green, otherwise we shall have you as ill as your mother. There is no hope of Mrs. Chillingworth's being able to leave her room at present, and till she can do so, I would not think of depriving her of the comfort of your attentions; at the same time, it is impossible to let you go on paying them at the expense of so much fatigue and discomfort to yourself. I have been thinking about it, several times to-day."

"What can we do, Robert?" said his wife, "I am sure you would not approve of my neglecting to be with the poor old people as much as possible."

"No, certainly not; I could not wish you to stay away from them. On the contrary, I have been planning for you to be more at your father's cottage, than you can now manage to be. I think it would be a very good scheme

to take a house or lodgings at Princes Green, and remove the nursery squadron and yourself into it as soon as possible."

"But you would be so uncomfortable, dearest," said his wife; "I could not leave you in this way, and I know you could not go with us. No, it is bad enough to be away from you as much as I am now, but that would be still worse."

"I shall not mind it at all, I assure you," answered the husband, "I see nothing to prevent my coming down in the evenings once or twice a week, and sleeping in the fresh air myself; and I am sure it will be the best arrangement for us all. Ridley has six weeks' holidays you know, so that will give us plenty of time."

"If you really do not care about our leaving you, it would be a great relief to me to carry out this plan of yours," said Mrs. Besborough; "the children would enjoy the change, and I should be thankful to be more with the dear old people. My father is sadly altered since my mother's illness, and indeed it was the thought of him which distressed me before you came in. I never saw him so imbecile as he was to-day."

"Let us consider my plan determined on then," said Mr. Besborough, "and to-morrow I will accompany you to Princes Green, and

try to secure a house. Nurse will be sure to enter warmly into the scheme, and be ready to start at an hour's notice, I don't doubt! Whatever promises to refresh the roses on her children's cheeks, is very certain to meet Mrs. Nurse's approval."

In pursuance of the idea thus originated Mr. and Mrs. Besborough went together to Princes Green on the following day, and were fortunate enough to hear of a lady, who was willing to let half of her house to a respectable family.

This lady was a Miss Chisel, a miniature painter by profession, who though now living in this obscure place, had formerly been an artist of some celebrity in her peculiar branch of art. Mr. Besborough remembered to have heard of her, and he was very glad to have the opportunity of placing his children in her house, particularly as his wife wished to sleep at her mother's during their sojourn at Princes Green.

Miss Chisel was by no means prepossessing in appearance, nor were her manners more agreeable than her countenance; but these were not important considerations in the present negotiation; Mr. Besborough knew very well that his children would not trouble themselves much about her, unless she won their regard by kindness and attention. They were

too merry and good natured to be fanciful and captious about other people's manners.

Miss Chisel had given her residence the name of Holbein House.

After the accommodation had been approved of by his wife and himself, Mr. Besborough said, "I like the place much, Miss Chisel, and think it very suitable for my family,—but are you sure we shall not prove annoying inmates to you? My children are lively, and are not accustomed at all times to very strict discipline; will they not be too noisy for you?"

"Not at all," replied the lady, "I dare say we shall do very well together. They will keep to that side of the house which you have hired, and I shall remain in my private apartments. They will not of course be allowed to invade them. The garden you have rented, so they will have a right to make themselves as disagreeable there, as may be essential to their gratification."

Mrs. Besborough looked somewhat uneasily at the cross woman, questioning if the house of such a person could really prove a comfortable home for her little ones. But her husband quickly ended the debate in her mind, by expressing his acceptance of the terms proposed, and proceeding to write a few lines of agreement to be signed by himself and Miss Chisel.

" My dear Mary," said he to his wife, when they left Holbein House, " do not have any misgivings about the children's comfort. Nurse will manage Miss Chisel capitally, you will see; her straightforward proceedings and simple, plain good sense will prove more than a match for her landlady's cunning and cross-grainedness. I must confess I never saw a more disagreeable looking mortal in my life than this Miss Chisel !"

" So very disagreeable that I don't half like the children's being there," said Mrs. Besborough.

" She certainly is not a beauty, and I dare say the children will not be much enraptured with her; but they will be safe in her house, which is the main consideration," said the Rector.

CHAPTER II.

HOUSEKEEPING ARRANGEMENTS.

THE children and nurse, with her assistant Mrs. Martha, arrived at Holbein House in the evening of the following day, and the delight with which they explored their new abode, was quite amusing to witness.

They were having their tea, about an hour

after their arrival, when Miss Chisel walked into the room, and looked round upon the group with a sort of grim satisfaction in her countenance, which riveted Bob's attention especially. He opened his large clear brown eyes very wide, and sat with his round chin resting on his chubby hands, examining her face with grave curiosity.

"Pray what are you staring at me so for?" asked Miss Chisel, "do you like my face so much that you cannot help looking at it?"

"No—me look at you, cong me never see nobody like you be-fore."

"You seem to be an admirable grammarian, Mr. Robert! Did you ever hear of Lindley Murray, pray?"

"No—me never heard nothing bout it."

"You should say, *I* never heard *anything* about *him*. Not, me never heard nothing bout it! Lindley Murray is a man's name."

"But me can't say, I never heard, and me don't know nothing bout that man."

"Miss Chisel may well be surprised at your talking so strangely, Bob," said his mother. "I wish she could shame you into taking more pains to leave off such baby language."

"Most likely the child has been admired for his defects," said Miss Chisel. "It's the fashion, I believe, for men not to be able to articulate their own language like

reasonable creatures. Good evening." And the amiable landlady strode out of the room, looking crosser even than when she came into it.

When Mrs. Besborough was preparing to return to the cottage for the night, Mary came up to her, and blushing very much, said,

"Mamma, could you be so very kind as to indulge Ridley and me in one thing—one other thing I mean?"

"That depends much on what sort of thing you intend to ask for, Mary," replied her mamma.

"It is not a thing, at all, mamma, dear," said Ridley. "What we want is, that you should be so very kind as to let us two keep house while we are here?"

"Yes, mamma, just as papa and you do. Bob is to be our brother living with us, you know, and Rose, our own little girl; and we think it will be quite as good as being married!"

"Better, perhaps, ma'am, in one way," said nurse, smiling, "there won't be any care for the ways and means to disturb their happiness, as is so often the case with young married folk."

"I am afraid my means would be likely to be rather heavily taxed by our young housekeepers, nurse, if I were to consent? and besides, what would they do for servants? for you would not wish to leave me, I think."

"Well, ma'am, for a bit of a change, I don't think I and Martha should mind. Servants always better themselves you see, ma'am, if they can ; and if after all, things should not go on so pleasantly as we expect, and we had to give it up, I dare say you would be so kind as to take us back, if Mr. Ridley and Miss Mary could give us good characters from our last place."

A shout of applause rewarded nurse's pleasantry, and it was then voted that everything was settled, and that Ridley and Mary were the master and mistress of the family !

CHAPTER III.

ORDERING DINNER.

"What's there for dinner, good Mrs. Bond ?"
"Beef in the larder, ducks in the pond."

EVERYBODY who knows anything at all about housekeeping, must be aware that ordering dinner is one of the most important duties of the day !

What a number of considerations have to be regarded. What is nice. What is in season. What is wholesome. What will suit the occasion. What will be enough and not

too much, for the number of persons who are to eat it. And—last, but not least important, what will suit the pocket of those who have to pay for it.

How many of these questions had suggested themselves to Mary and Ridley when they began housekeeping, may be gathered from the conversation over the breakfast table, the day after they were established at Princes Green.

"I say, Ridley, what shall we have for dinner to-day?" asked Mary.

"I think there is nothing so good as ducks and green peas," replied Ridley. "I vote we have some for dinner to-day."

"Yes, and jam tarts. We all like those; you do, Bob, I know, and so do nurse and Martha."

"Well," said nurse, "I had rather set my fancy on something else; but of course you will be the best judges of what you like to have."

"I guess you would prefer chickens; you always do. Well let's have a chicken or two then," said Ridley.

"I don't think now, that we have found out what nurse meant," said Mary, "her face does not look as if we had. What did you fancy, nurse?"

"If you are so kind as to think of me, my

dear, my fancy was for a nice little joint ; a little bit of beef, very nicely roasted, (Martha's a capital cook) or a plump leg of lamb, with a few French beans ; they have them here remarkably fine. I always think your grand-papa's beans very good."

"Yes, that's what we will have," said Mary, "and I'm glad you mentioned what you wished for, dear nursey. Bob, you shall choose a pudding. What do you prefer ; that means like best."

"Gooberry punning me like best, and oh, gooberry pie more best!"

"Oh, Bob, that's too bad ! more best, ha, ha, you ought not to have a bit of gooseberry pie till you talk *more better*. But now, Mary, this is enough dinner for to-day, is it not ? Do come into the garden, and let us see what games we can play at, in it."

"You must not forget, sir," said nurse, "that housekeepers have a great deal to do. You must go out shopping presently, and buy this dinner, and a good many other things for your family. I think the best way will be, for Mary to get a bit of paper and write down all we shall want."

"To be sure I will," cried Mary, "I shall never remember all the things else. Let me see, I will begin with 'things to eat.' Meat, and bread, and butter, and eggs, and cheese,"

writing the words down as she pronounced them.

"And things to drink," added Ridley. Tea and sugar (they are to make drink of) and milk, and coffee, and beer, for nurse and Martha. And I say, Martha, you are our cook, shan't you want coals? Yes, coals and flour, Mary, for puddings."

"Oh, you nassy boy, Ringley!" cried Bob, "oh gooness me! to want nassy black coals put in we're punning! Mamma never has sush things. She has coals to make fire of, and flour and good things for punnings. Me *won't* eat black coals!"

Everybody laughed at Bob's wrath, and at the notion of his setting any other person's speech right; but after this little interruption the list went on quickly, and they were ready to go out with nurse on this charming shopping expedition, by the time she had completed her morning arrangements.

An hour sufficed to complete all their purchases, for in Princes Green, several very dissimilar things are usually sold at each shop; and business being thus quickly despatched, the little Besboroughs were able to go and pay their grandpapa and grandmamma a visit.

Mr. Chillingworth was a very old man, nearly eighty, and within the last year, he had become somewhat childish. At times indeed,

he was scarcely able to take care of himself ; but generally he could collect his thoughts pretty well, unless left too long alone ; in which case he fell into an imbecile state, and resorted to the most childish amusements to pass away his time.

He could talk for half an hour or so, quite pleasantly, but long conversations fatigued his mind, and he would begin to wander, and say very ridiculous things.

When his grandchildren reached his cottage, he had finished his morning duty of reading the Psalms and Lessons for the day,—for he was no longer able to get to Church—and he was in his garden, weeding a very small onion bed.

“ Ah, my dears,” said he, “ I was just thinking about you. I have dug you a good basket of potatoes for your dinner, and you can put them into your wheelbarrow and take them home.”

“ Thank you, grandpapa, that will be very nice. But have you taken care of our old barrow all this time ?”

“ Yes, Ridley, it’s in my tool-house. Always take care of things. It’s amazing how long they last if you do ! There’s no legs to it, and only one handle, but it will do quite well if you manage it cleverly.”

The old gentleman trotted off to his tool

shed, and returned with the remains of the barrow, into which he carefully emptied about a dozen small potatoes, out of a cabbage leaf on which he had laid them. These he covered up with leaves, and then placed ‘an uncommon fine salad’ on the top, consisting of a handful of cress, and a few strangely crooked radishes. His glee at this magnificent load of vegetables was great! One of his harmless delusions was, that his garden was the most fertile spot within miles of the place! and he fully believed that his tiny crops were plentiful harvests of every thing that was best of garden produce.

A short visit to grandmamma was all the children were allowed this morning, for the old lady had suffered a little from the excitement of the last two days, and was to be kept perfectly quiet until to-morrow.

Mrs. Besborough walked home with her children, and explained to them how she wished their time to be divided. Ridley and Mary were to do lessons for a couple of hours, while Bob and the baby got their morning’s sleep; at which time she would generally be able to come to them, and attend to their studies. Dinner would then occupy another of the hottest hours of the day, after which their time was at their own disposal.

Of course they would come to the cottage

every day, and usually one or even two of them would be able to stay an hour to chat with the dear grandmamma.

The garden belonging to Holbein House was a good sized piece of ground, but nothing could be less picturesque than this neglected spot. There were three or four lilacs in it; and three enormously tall sunflowers, whose great yellow faces seemed to stare at you in the most vacant and disagreeable way, from the three corners in which they stood.

Under one wall a few forlorn old worn out gooseberry and currant bushes lingered out a useless existence, and the only flourishing thing in the place was a prodigious crop of groundsel, which had overrun every bed, and nearly covered the paths too, with its ragged leaves and insignificant flower.

At the bottom of the garden, however, there was one tall old elm, which still possessed a couple of stout arms, exactly suited to support a swing! would Miss Chisel allow them to have one put up, they wondered?

The only way to ascertain, was to go and ask her; so Ridley and Mary proceeded to that lady's private sitting-room, and knocked at the door, awaiting permission to enter.

It was given in Miss Chisel's gruffest voice.

The room into which they entered was called

'the Studio.' It was a large apartment, very scantily furnished, having in it only an old sofa, three gracefully shaped old chairs of different patterns, a table, a footstool, and a high screen, which leaned up against the wall, and on which were hung some shawls of different colours, that Miss Chisel made use of as backgrounds for her pictures.

She was painting a fancy piece on ivory, and looked up from her work with a scowling brow when the children came up to her.

"Well, what do you want, young people," said she, "your great round eyes say as plainly as tongues could do, that you have come on some mighty important errand."

"May we have a swing fixed up in your tree, Miss Chisel? that tall tree at the bottom of the garden?" said Ridley.

"And so have the means of breaking your necks some day. I can tell you I do not want coroners' inquests in my house! However it is your mother's business to take care of you, and not mine, thank goodness! so do as you like, if she says you may have it, yes, and the first thing that you'll do, will be to toss your sister out of it, and break some of her bones. No fear of that little grammarian or you coming to harm, for boys never do. The whole of the male sex know very well how to save themselves from hurt, and to make the

poor fools girls and women do all the suffering in this world."

"Oh, Miss Chisel, how can you say such things!" cried Mary, "my brothers always take care of me, and so does dear papa, and most of all of mamma. But perhaps you never had a dear kind papa or brothers?"

"No," interrupted Ridley, "and she never was married, so I don't see how she can judge. If I thought Mary would get hurt, Miss Chisel, I should not ask for a swing, I am very sure."

"There, there; that will do, go away—you had better tell the carpenter man Benson, over the way, to come and put up your swing. I hate strange people about the premises."

And with this ungracious jumble of consent and growling she dismissed her visitors without further ceremony.

Mrs. Besborough's consent was readily given, and master Benson happening to be at leisure, came over and fixed the swing by tea-time; after which the evening was but too short to revel in the new pleasure of flying through the air, 'and feeling like birds,' as they said.

While they were at the height of this fun, they were surprised to see an old man come into the garden, and walk about as though at home there. He was very tall, but stooped

much, and in walking leaned on a crutch-headed stick.

He came towards the elm and stood looking at the children for some time. At first this made them feel a little shy, but their embarrassment went off, and the swinging proceeded as merrily as before he appeared in the garden.

Nurse offered him a seat on a bench which she had brought out, but he declined it, and walked away to another part of the garden. Soon, however, he returned, and again watched the children with evident interest.

"What are you doing there, father?" screamed Miss Chisel from a window, "you must not go and bore those children. They have hired the garden, I told you, and they don't want *you* there, I'm very certain."

"Well, well, I'll come in; anything for peace! anything for peace!" and he began slowly to retrace his steps towards the house.

Ridley jumped down out of the swing, and ran after him.

"Don't go in, sir, if you like to stay here. We do not want to be troublesome to anybody. Papa and mamma would be quite sorry if they knew that our play annoyed anyone, and particularly such an old man as you are," looking at the long, white hair which hung over Mr. Chisel's coat collar.

"Thank you, young sir," answered the old

gentleman. "I could have been well content to stay and see you all at play, but you hear my daughter does not approve of it. Another time, perhaps, I may stay and refresh myself with gazing on your young faces. Ah!" continued he, muttering to himself as he walked away, "why do we live so long! Alas! what is life when youth, gracious youth, is gone! Dregs left in the cup, after the wine has been quaffed!"

"Who is he, nurse?" said Mary, in a whisper.

"Miss Chisel's father, Miss," said Martha, "the little maid told me his daughter keeps him up in a garret, and won't let him speak to anybody, if she can help it. And there's that poor little mortal of a servant! what a life she does lead!"

"Look at her now," cried Ridley, "up at the attic window. What can she be doing?"

"Making believe to swing," said Nurse, "goodness me, I'm afraid she'll topple out of the window, flourishing about as she is doing!"

"She's a queer little thing," said Martha. "She's only thirteen years old, and does the work of a grown woman. But she can't read or write, and lives in that kitchen underground all by herself, till the poor little creature's half crazy, I think!"

"Do go in, Martha, and beg her not to

throw herself about so, for I know she'll be out of that window, presently," said Nurse.

"And then Miss Chisel would have the Coroner's Inquest in her house I suppose, which she told us she should not like, eh, Mary! what strange things she said, about men's unkindness to women, and boys being so unfeeling to their sisters. Mary! my own darling Mary, I hope I shall never be unkind to you!"

"And Bong Besbur won't let nobody be unkind and hurt him bavy! pretty ingle sing eong he love her so much!" said Rose's never-failing champion.

Ah! gracious, noble, little Bob Besborough! May your manhood fulfil the promise of your early years. Brave little Bob, and gentle as brave, to you to be weak and helpless, and 'a poor dear ingle sing' is to possess a sure claim on your loving regard and the ready help of one of the strongest of baby arms! Sweet, noble, manful little Bob Besborough!

CHAPTER IV.

GRANDMAMMA'S STORIES OF SCHOOL DAYS.

GRANDMAMMA was soon able to sit up again in her large easy chair, but she was not allowed

to attempt to leave her room ; and indeed could not have got down stairs, had she tried to do so.

Sometimes she could not bear the fatigue of talking to her grandchildren, but it was a pleasure to her to have them in her room, either chatting quietly with each other, or reading for their own amusement. To look at them even, afforded happiness to this most tender, loving woman.

Ridley was her especial darling. She called him 'the light of her eyes,' and seemed never to weary of perusing his sweet ingenuous countenance, or of listening to his agreeable voice.

It is very difficult to describe Mrs. Chillingworth so as to convey a correct idea of her. To say that she was a lovely old woman, would sound like a contradiction, for we do not generally associate the ideas of loveliness and old age. Yet it would be quite correct, to say so of Grandmamma Chillingworth.

She had very handsome features ; a fine forehead ; remarkably regular eyebrows ; and large grey eyes which looked so lovingly at you, that it seemed like coming into sunshine when she turned them towards you. Then she had a very pretty mouth, which you could see in a moment, had been accustomed only to say kind things ! All this, however, gives you but a very imperfect idea of the charming old

lady. She was gentle and calm, and her manner was characterized by a soft dignity which was very beautiful. She had a lively fancy, such as one seldom meets with in so old a person, and moreover possessed considerable intellectual power. All these fine qualities imparted to her countenance a charm far exceeding any which could have resulted from mere beauty of feature.

A few days after the little Besboroughs came down to Princes Green, a friend having offered to take their papa's duty, he had a leisure day, and he went with Ridley to the river which flows within two miles of that village, to give him his first lesson in swimming. It was arranged that Mrs. Besborough and Bob should walk with them, and amuse themselves in the fields, while the swimming lesson was given, and grandmamma was to be entrusted to Mary's nursing for the afternoon.

While Mary and her grandmamma were chatting after dinner, it came into the head of the little girl to ask Mrs. Chillingworth if she had ever been to school ?

"Yes, my love," answered she, "I was at school two years, and a very happy part of my life those school days were. Mrs. D'Almaine, the lady under whose care I was placed, was a perfect gentlewoman, and she treated us with

maternal kindness; we were indeed, more like a large family than a school."

"How many girls were there, grandmamma?" asked Mary.

"Twelve, my love. Never more, and very seldom fewer. Mrs. D'Almaine lived at Faversdale, about thirty miles from the coast; and my father and mother in the little Isle of Minster; so I had a journey of some length to make, in going to and from school.

"At the end of my first half year, which was at Midsummer, my father came to fetch me himself. But when the Christmas holidays approached, he wrote to say he should not be able to come to Faversdale at that time; and that he wished Mrs. D'Almaine to send me in a post-chaise, to Lilbourne, where he would meet me at the Rose Inn, and take me home. Lilbourne is about eleven miles from the Isle of Minster.

"I was mightily delighted with the dignity of going all alone in this manner, and was earnest in declining the attendance of one of Mrs. D'Almaine's servants to Lilbourne. My father was a rather eccentric man, and Mrs. D'Almaine told me she felt unwilling to insist on my being accompanied by her servant, least it might happen to displease him; one of his peculiar notions being, that at twelve years old, a girl should be quite able to take care of herself."

"And did you really go alone at last, grand-mamma?" said Mary.

"Yes, my dear. On reaching Lilbourne, I found that my father had not been at the Rose that day. He was never known to put up his chaise at any other Inn, so the landlady felt sure that he was not in the town. She took me into her own parlour, and made me dine with her; and as the afternoon wore away, and my father did not make his appearance, she entreated me to remain that night with her, and let her send a messenger to my home, to inform my parents where I was.

"This, however, did not suit my inclination at all. I was but a little girl, my dear, and was very proud of being allowed to travel in my own post-chaise, all by myself, and I therefore resolved to finish my journey as I had begun it.

"I ordered another chaise, and much to the disturbance of the good-natured hostess, departed in the twilight of a winter's afternoon on my road homewards.

"I was just in time to take advantage of the last chance for the great Ferry boat to cross to Minster, and I sat very grand in my chaise, while the ferry men in their great jack boots and huge oil-skin hats, waded into the water, and dragged my carriage into the wide, flat-bottomed boat.

"The tide was strong, and we were some time getting over. In the boat were some oxen, and the poor creatures were sadly frightened at their unusual situation ; they bellowed and moaned most piteously, and their deep voices sounded to me very awful, as I thought how I was getting every moment farther and farther away from all help, except that of the rude, heavy-looking boors who were straining at the ropes by which they dragged the boat across the stream. Even these men I could hardly see, for the darkness had come on rapidly, and the lanterns in the boats were mere specks of light gleaming through the fog.

"However, by and by, the welcome sound of the boat grating on the pebbles of the shore, reassured me. The chaise was hauled out, the horses put to in a moment, and I was again jolting and rumbling along towards home, in the glory of my solitary state in my yellow post-chaise.

"I think I hear still the rattle of the vehicle over the ill-paved streets of the town, as the post-boy, putting his horses to their best speed, clattered up to my father's door.

"The bell was rung, and old Timothy, our man-servant, opened the door. Instead of coming to let me out of the chaise, no sooner did he catch sight of me, nodding to him from the window, than the old fellow turned round

and ran into the room where my father and mother were sitting, and cried out, ‘Oh, my goodness, gracious me ! if here ain’t Miss Nancy come home in a po-shay !’ and I, having been let out by the post-boy, followed Timothy into the room, and saw him, doubled up with laughter, squeezing his knuckles into his sides, and stamping about, saying, ‘he, he ! he, he, he ! goodness gi’ me ! if here ain’t Miss Nancy come home in a po-shay !’ ”

“ Oh, thank you, dear grandmamma !” said Mary, kissing the old lady’s pleasant face, “ thank you for that delightful story ! I shall tell it to Ridley when he comes home. But I am sure you must be tired, quite tired out, talking so long. Put your feet up, so, and just eat one little bunch of grapes,—this is a beauty,”—selecting the finest in the plate, “ and then I will go and see if grandpapa would like me to read a little to him, while you go to sleep, please, for a little time ; for I am afraid you will be too tired, after exerting yourself so much.

Grandmamma did as she was bidden : put her feet up on a stool, ate her fruit, and then closing her eyes, resigned herself to the slumber she really needed, after her long narration.

CHAPTER V.

GRANDPAPA'S CAT IN DANGER OF COLD.

MARY found her grandpapa sitting in his 'parlour,' and amusing himself with fondling a very beautiful cat, named Dick, who was his inseparable companion when in-doors.

"I assure you, my dear," said he, "I was quite uncomfortable about Dick last week, (I think it was last week—but it might have been the week before.) You know it rained a good deal, and Dick would persist in sitting on the wall by the garden door, watching a rat's hole the rascal had discovered. And you know nothing could be more imprudent! enough to give him the rheumatism in all his legs, to sit on those bricks, soaked as they were with rain, and with little tufts of wet moss filling up the chinks. However, I do not think Dick took any harm."

"Dear me, no, sir!" said Susan the maid, who came into the room while he was speaking, "there was much more likelihood of your being harmed than Dick; for you know you got nearly wet through, one day, running about, calling Dick, Dick, Dick! When you came in, the rain was running off your bald head, sir, all into your neck. Your grandpapa, Miss Mary, had to change hisself twice that

week, all along of getting so wet through hunting for that cat in the rain.

Mary burst into a shout of laughter ; for to her, Susan's saying that grandpapa had 'changed hisself,' seemed about the funniest part of the affair.

Dick was a most sociable quadruped, and very willing to accept attention from anybody who felt disposed to offer it. He now got up in Mary's lap, and stood arching up his back as she smoothed his glossy coat, and flourishing his long tail into her face, till the loose hairs made her sneeze so much she was obliged to put him down, whereat Mr. Dick looked greatly surprised.

Then grandpapa proposed that they should go and look over 'heaps of playthings,' which he had preserved in his tool-house ; so they trotted off together on this interesting errand.

It was curious to mark the wonder with which the old gentleman and his grandchild regarded each other on this occasion. Mr. Chillingworth could not understand that Mary was growing older, and felt astonished and disappointed that she did not now value old defaced dolls, and three-legged horses, and cracked humming-tops, as much as she might have done perhaps, four or five years before. While Mary wondered how her grandpapa could have imagined such rubbish could amuse her. But

she had been too well instructed in the meaning of the Divine precept, ‘do unto others as you would have others do to you,’ to let the kind old man perceive the extent of her contempt for the odds and ends he had collected in the hamper.

Amongst the things preserved, was a small doll’s kitchen, minus all the cooking utensils. This led to talk about dolls’ houses, and Mary happened to say that she should like to have a large one, above all toys.

“ My dear,” said grandpapa, “ I’ll make you one ! You have no idea what a carpenter I am. I used to make your grandmamma a great many things when I was a young man ; and I did not understand the work half as well as I do now. It’s wonderful how I improve in these things ! Bless me ! why when I look back and think of what I was formerly, I see if I had only been as clever then as I am now, I should have cut a very different figure in life to what I have done.”

Mary hardly knew what to say or do ; it was so strange to hear him talk so : she thought in her own mind, that he did not seem nearly so clever as he used to be a year or two since. But then perhaps she was not a judge. She resolved to talk the matter over with Ridley. Ridley knew everything so much better than she did.

Presently Susan came to say that her mistress was ready for tea, and would not master let her brush his coat, and be so good as to wash his hands before he went up to tea in mistress's room.

They had finished tea when the party from the river returned ; and Mrs. Besborough was so exceedingly fatigued, that she agreed to remain where she was for the night, without attempting to go to Holbein House, to kiss baby, and sup with the others as she had purposed to do.

Mary and her papa and brothers returned home without her, and a very merry party they were, when they sat down to partake of the refreshment which awaited them at their lodgings. Ridley and Mary, host and hostess of course ; and delightful it was to these hospitable personages, to see with what appetite the dear papa ate of the provisions placed before him—he being, as he said, as hungry as a hunter—and to hear the encomiums he passed on the judicious selection of dishes, made by his entertainers !

In one of the Churches in that neighbourhood, the curfew bell is still rung every evening ; and the clear notes floating over the intervening fields, now came to tell of bed-time, to the young inmates of Holbein House.

Before the good father dismissed his darlings

to their repose, he as usual gathered them and their faithful attendants around him, to join in prayer to the Giver of the abundant blessings bestowed upon them all. He read to them the Lessons of the day from that Holy Book, whence he drew the rules of his own life and that of the family whom God had entrusted to his guidance; and he explained to them how the life of active charity, and patient self-denial of the LORD JESUS, was the example for their imitation, as much as his doctrine was to be the rule of their faith.

The Service ended, the children went to bed, and their father strolled into the garden to enjoy the coolness of the evening air.

After pacing up and down a few times, the Rector threw himself along the bench which Nurse had placed in the garden; and gradually overcome by the quietude of the place, and the harmony of the bells which had now struck up a different chime, he dropped asleep.

He was awoke by a deep sigh, and on opening his eyes perceived Mr. Chisel leaning on his stick, and intently gazing on him.

"Ah, you catch me at advantage," said Mr. Besborough, starting up, "I was thoroughly tired by a long ramble with my boys. I think I address Mr. Chisel, the father of our hostess?"

"Yes, that is my name. I beg your pardon

for intruding on you. Good night, sir." And he moved towards the house.

"Do not go, I entreat," said the Rector, "the evening is delightful; it is a pity to be indoors. I am not so tired but what I can very comfortably stroll about this place a little; take my arm, I beg, and you will find a walk very pleasant, I am sure."

Mr. Chisel hesitated a moment, appearing to ponder the real meaning of the offer. He looked at the speaker as one might regard the actions of an animal of some rare species, whose instincts were yet to be learned. The scrutiny ended in his accepting the proffered arm, and the two men then walked up and down that wilderness of weeds, till the moon rose, and shed her silvery beams over the tall figures which traversed that neglected garden.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD SCULPTOR.

THE Rector and his wife were with their children early next morning, and the meeting in the garden last night was mentioned by the former.

"Mr. Chisel is greatly to be pitied," said

the Rector ; "he informed me of several circumstances which convince me that he is an amiable, well-disposed man, and has fallen into his present unhappy position through a series of unfortunate events, over many of which he had no control. I mean to tell you somewhat about him, that you may understand and respect his sorrows.

"He was a Sculptor by profession, and seems to have possessed considerable talent, but not the industry which alone could render that talent productive of benefit to himself or other people. He appears, Ridley," said he, turning to his son, "to have had fine thoughts ; to have conceived in his own mind grand ideas. He could see in his own mind how grand statues ought to be formed to represent these ideas ; but he had not persevering industry to work long, long years with untiring patience, to acquire such skill of hand as would enable him to sculpture in marble the beautiful images he conceived in his brain. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think so, papa. I tried to make a box a little while since, and thought how Mary would cover it with paper, and paint it, and varnish it, like a box mamma has ; and I thought of all the divisions I should put in it, to hold different things. When I had got it ready, and fastened three sides, and tried to do the fourth, it all came to pieces again. So I

tried the last side first, and went back to what I began with ; and that was just the same ; it all fell to bits again when I tried to put the fourth corner together. So as I went to school, I called at Crosley the carpenter's, and asked him what was the reason my box would not hold together. And he said, 'Sir, a man wants a seven years' apprenticeship to our trade ; and you may be a cute little gentleman, and fancy uncommon smart boxes : but I guess you've not worked seven years to learn how to make them like what you fancy.'"

"Very well, you perceive what I mean. Mr. Chisel did not like the 'seven years' apprenticeship' part of his art, so his fine ideas seldom came to more perfection than your box. Now and then poverty drove him to work, and then he executed busts, and various pieces of sculpture which never gave free scope to his genius, just to earn enough money to supply his most pressing wants. This done, he relapsed into his state of dreamy idleness.

"He married and had two children. A son, and Miss Chisel. The son had talent, but still less steadiness to cultivate it than the father. He enlisted in the army,—married,—had one baby,—lost his wife,—and finally was himself killed in India, seven years since. His daughter is still alive. She is that unfortunate little maid of Miss Chisel's!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mrs. Besborough, "can she possibly be the child of Miss Chisel's own brother, the wretched, neglected, ignorant being she is! I never heard anything more monstrous."

"She is, I assure you, the daughter of that soldier brother. She does not know of her own relationship to her mistress, Miss Chisel keeping her in ignorance of it to serve her own ends, and the poor old man wishing to spare his grandchild this additional misery. What adds to the wickedness of the thing is, that the poor child has a pension of four shillings the week, which her aunt appropriates."

"How is it that the old man allows the poor girl to be treated thus? Has he no means of maintaining her?"

"None, my love," replied Mr. Besborough, "he has an annuity of twenty pounds the year, and his daughter permits him to occupy an attic in this house on condition of his keeping out of sight, and providing his own food."

"The wretched miserly creature! I am ashamed to know that there is a woman so wanting in all womanly feeling," said Mrs. Besborough. "Why, she told me herself, that she has two hundred a year, left to her for her life, by her godmother!"

"The poor man endures all the insolence of his daughter," said the Rector, "and lives on

the scantiest possible allowance of the necessities of life, in order to lay by a few shillings for his unhappy grandchild. I had some difficulty to induce him to speak of himself, but afterwards finding that I was really interested, he threw off all reserve, and told me that he was so anxious to gain a friend for his little one, that he would gladly expose his own errors, and re-open old wounds, rather than lose a chance of creating an interest in my mind for her."

"Cannot you do something for her, papa?" said Mary, "and may we talk to her a little?"

"You may not take much notice of her, lest you should create a feeling of displeasure in the mind of her aunt, who would be sure to vent it on the unfortunate girl. If I can manage to get the poor child put into some way of earning a livelihood, you can help then if you like, by sending her to a Sunday school to be taught to read and write."

"Oh! thank you, papa," cried the children, "we will so gladly give our allowance for her to go to school."

"Half of it will do, darlings; and your mamma and I will try what we can do about placing her with some kind body to work for herself. But she and I must talk it all over well before we mention it to anybody. Now all of you must remember that what I have

told you was spoken in confidence to me. That confidence I have extended to you all, believing that I am quite sure of your aiding me in the good work, and not repeating to anybody what I have told you, now you know I wish it kept secret. You all promise?"

"Yes, yes," all speaking at once, "we promise."

CHAPTER VII.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS.

THE notion of making a doll's house for Mary, unfortunately took possession of Mr. Chillingworth's brain, and he thought and talked of nothing else from morning to night.

Mrs. Besborough was obliged to draw plans and patterns of every imaginable form of house, mansion, and villa, and thatched cottage, and even a castle! At length the old man decided on a 'mansion.' Then arose a new difficulty. He did not like wooden houses, 'so paltry,—mere lath and plaster things.' No, he would build it either of stone, or of brick.

A few hours' cogitation and a confidential interview with a stone-cutter in the neighbourhood, showed him that the first of these grand

ideas must be relinquished ; and he then resolved on building it of brick.

But whence could bricks of suitable size be obtained ? nowhere.

So he finally made up his mind to make and burn a sufficient supply of small bricks himself, and to defer beginning 'the mansion,' till they were duly prepared.

All this was really very troublesome to Mrs. Besborough, and every one else about him, and Mary was excessively annoyed at being the innocent cause of the vexation. She really felt quite guilty, though she knew very well that she was not in reality to blame in the matter.

Ridley at first entered very warmly into his grandfather's magnificent schemes ; but a few days convinced the boy of their impracticability ; and from that time it was Bob alone, who thoroughly and without any misgivings shared in grandpapa's hopes of a splendid result of all this planning and preparation.

The old gentleman ceased to talk of his schemes after a few days, for with that glimmering of sense which he still retained, he discerned that those around did not feel with him, but that they assented to his remarks, because they did not like to contradict him. Though he had not intelligence enough to understand the grounds of their incredulity as to the ultimate success of his devices, he had enough to

perceive that they had no faith in him, and it annoyed him very greatly.

Meanwhile Miss Chisel had begun to make advances towards a better acquaintance with ‘the little grammarian,’ as she called Bob; but that individual was not at all disposed to respond amiably to her demonstrations of regard.

Miss Chisel tried to entice him into her studio by promises of pretty pictures to look at; and even went so far as to procure a plate of pears, and hold them out as an inducement to him to pay her a visit.

“ Me don’t want she’s pears,” said he; “ and she so ugly, and *so* cross ! She say to ingle maid—‘ Get long, bad girl ; you a beggar, you a thief ; you eat too much dinner :’ and she try to box ingle maid’s ears, nassy cross old sing. Bong Besbur *won’t* go into she’s roomg.”

Finding that her little attentions produced no effect on Bob’s obdurate heart, Miss Chisel tried her powers on Ridley and Mary, hoping to accomplish her purpose through their instrumentality. Her object was to make a likeness of Bob.

She easily persuaded the elder children to pay her a visit, and gave them real pleasure by exhibiting several beautiful pictures of her own painting, and allowing them to inspect her sketches, &c. &c.

The delicate highly-finished little paintings on ivory were more within compass of their uninformed minds, than finer conceptions of genius would have been; they could not fail to see the prettiness of the fair smooth-browed goddesses, and the more glowing beauties of the Apollos and Narcissuses which formed the principal figures in her 'historical' pieces!

Miss Chisel's portraits were admirable; the likenesses speaking, as people call it, and the execution delicate and charming; and with this part of her collection Mr. and Mrs. Besborough, as well as their children, were greatly interested. Both the Rector and his wife made several little visits to 'the studio,' being desirous of cultivating the artist's goodwill by every means in their power, for the sake of the unfortunate Lucy, her niece; for they hoped that by conciliating the feelings of the aunt, their plans for the benefit of the girl might be facilitated.

They so far succeeded in gaining on the good graces of Miss Chisel, that she allowed her father to remain in peace in the garden with the children, at their request.

The old Sculptor might now be often seen in the evenings, swinging the baby gently and tenderly as a woman, smiling placidly as she cooed and kicked her little feet with delight at the agreeable motion. Soon she began to

reach out towards his long white locks ; and the forlorn old man would remain quiet as long as she was amused with this plaything, and let her tug and jerk them with no little energy, happy in finding that there was one human being, however small, who felt no repugnance to caress his ungainly form.

It may be supposed, that the housekeeping had been the source of great amusement all this while. On the day week after the instalment of Ridley and Mary as master and mistress of the establishment, Mrs. Besborough had been much pleased by Mary's putting into her hand a neatly kept account book, in which she had entered every article they had bought and the price paid for it ; the whole summed up by Ridley, and subtracted from the amount deposited in their hands by their mamma, and the balance carried forward towards the next week's expenditure.

The sum spent was not at all more than Mrs. Besborough approved ; and she told them she was so well pleased with their prudence, and the methodical way in which they had managed their affairs, that she gladly consented to the continuance of the plan as long as they remained at Holbein House.

Ridley and Bob had been several times to their grandpapa, to help in the construction of moulds to cast the bricks in for Mary's

house ; but on every occasion the attempts made by the three workmen had, as might have been expected, completely failed of success.

They were to make yet one more effort, and as it happened that Mrs. Besborough wanted to spend that afternoon with a very dear friend of hers, who lived in that neighbourhood, Mary was left again head-nurse to grandmamma.

It may be supposed that the opportunity of entreating for another tale of old times from Mrs. Chillingworth, would not be neglected by her story-loving little attendant ; and as it was one of the old lady's 'well days,' she was both able and willing to comply with the request.

"More about what I did at school, darling, do you want to know?" said she. "There were several particulars in which our mode of life shows the difference between the manners of that day and those of the present time. One of them was our dancing lessons. The dancing days were to us the most delightful days of the week. The dances which were then in vogue were quite unlike those which are preferred now. Slow stately movements and studied attitudes tried our self-possession extremely. The minuet-de-la-cour was the triumph of triumphs ! To dance that with grace stamped a young creature as perfectly elegant ! and indeed I must confess, if she

had the slightest degree of that undignified self-consciousness which makes people shy, because they think too much how other people regard what they are doing, it was sure to display itself in these elaborate dances. It was difficult to learn the minuet and some other dances without gentlemen partners; so as the boys at the King's school were taught by the same master as ourselves, it was arranged that both schools should attend at the Assembly-rooms at the same time, and receive their lessons together."

"Oh, grandmamma, what fun," exclaimed Mary. "Did you dance with whom you pleased?"

"No, my dear, the master selected our partners; and excepting the proper form of asking us to dance, and the customary reply on our part, we were not allowed to speak to each other. But still it was a pleasant change in the week's routine, and we liked the dancing days very much.

"On our return from the dancing-school, we had another pleasure which was even more valued than our dancing lessons. Those girls who were above thirteen years old, were allowed the privilege of inviting three of their school-fellows to tea with them. Each lady who was to have a party, was supplied with a little table and tea equipage, and made

tea herself, and did the honours of her entertainment in the most graceful manner in her power.

"Mrs. D'Almaine used to join us for a few minutes now and then, entering into the conversation which might be going on, and encouraging us to talk on such subjects as we imagined might be interesting to our guests. Nothing displeased Mrs. D'Almaine more, than for anyone to be so ill-bred as to stop talking when she joined us. She used to say, that people of good taste and refinement would not discuss private affairs over a tea-table; and that whatever subject was proper to interest us, was sure to be agreeable to her also.

"Very pleasant indeed, my dear, these little parties were; and as the duties of a hostess were much more active in those days than now, and teadrinking was the great feature of most entertainments, it was quite important that girls should early acquire the art of presiding gracefully over the tea-table."

"I think it must have been delightful to have had these parties," said Mary; "I am very fond of making tea, are not you, grandmamma? Did you stay long enough at school to be one of those who gave parties?"

"Yes, my dear," replied the old lady, "I remained till I was fourteen. Just before the

last Christmas that I was at school, our dancing-master gave a very grand ball to us and his pupils at the King's School. A great many of our friends were invited, and amongst others, a young man who had left school the quarter before. He was sixteen only; but I think young people were considered older for their years in my youth than they are now, which was a great misfortune to them; their education was thought to be complete just at the time when young people begin to make real use of the opportunity of learning.

"Well, my dear, Mr. Chillingworth —— "

"Oh, grandmamma!" exclaimed Mary, "are you going to tell me about him too?"

"Yes, my dear, a little about him," said the old lady with a smile. "Mr. Chillingworth and I had frequently danced together before, so we naturally were partners again.

"I believe we both felt a little embarrassment, for we had grown much, and had changed our style of dress, in that short time since we last met; and the moment we caught sight of each other we recollect—I think both of us did—that we met now, not as children, but as young people in society.

"Perhaps you would like to hear how we were dressed? Mr. Chillingworth wore a Pompadour coat, shaped like those which are worn at court (Pompadour is a purple-crimson

colour); and he had white satin knee-breeches, and a waistcoat of the same material embroidered with gold. His hair, which was very long, was curled and powdered, and he had handsome ruffles of point-lace at his wrists. His bearing was always peculiarly debonaire."

"And your dress, grandmamma?"

"I wore a pink lutestring train, and a petticoat and boddice of the same; a white-flowered gauze apron; and a small gauze cap, ornamented with flowers, set on the top of an immensely high head-dress of my own hair. My hair was powdered, and frizzed up, and dressed over small cushions of silk, made to support the enormous fabric."

"How I should like to have a picture of you, like what you were then!" said Mary.

"I can hardly help smiling at the recollection of my own appearance, which I assure you, then seemed to me by no means despicable. But nothing could have been more ridiculous than our dress in reality was; so artificial and inconvenient, and so utterly unsuited to the simple graces of early youth. Think, Mary, of a gentlewoman not having her hair undressed or brushed for weeks at a time! The fatigue and the great length of time required to dress a lady's hair, and in the country the great expense, unless she had a very clever

maid indeed, precluded the possibility of having it done frequently."

"I don't like that notion at all," said Mary. "Not brush one's hair ! What would Nurse say ? Well, and then after that ball you left school ; and did you marry grandpapa then ?"

"No, no ; not quite so soon as that, my dear. I did not see Mr. Chillingworth for three years after that. Then I met him at Malvern, where I was on a visit to a cousin of my father's. Mr. Chillingworth's father lived near Malvern. We saw a good deal of each other there ; and shortly after Mr. Chillingworth got an appointment in the Admiralty, and came to London to live. As soon as he was of age, and had come into possession of a small property, he wrote to me, to say that he should come to Minster, on a certain day, and ask my father to let me be his wife."

"Were not you surprised, grandmamma ?"

"No, my love ; because I knew he intended to do so. Well on the evening of the day on which I expected him, it was very stormy, and I began to feel very anxious, as two hours passed over after the time he had named for his arrival, and he did not appear.

"It seems that the tide was unusually high, and that when Mr. Chillingworth reached the Ferry, the great boat was already halfway

across towards the Island, on its return from the last journey for that night.

" However they made the men hear, and they began to pull back again towards the mainland. The horses were not yet taken out of the chaise, but they were being unharnessed, when a very vivid flash of lightning frightened them so much, that they set off full gallop, and the stream taking a sudden bend not far from the Ferry, the horses dashed right into the water before any one could stop them. They kicked and plunged most furiously for a moment; but happily part of the traces having been loosened the whole gave way, and the liberated horses were borne down the tide, and the chaise drifted after them, though much more slowly.

" There was nothing to be done but to draw up the windows to keep out the water, and then sit quiet, putting trust in God, who was able to rescue His servant if He saw fit. So Mr. Chillingworth, who was then as now a good and pious man, sat still, commanding himself to the mercy of his Maker, and thinking sadly of the poor young girl who was waiting for him, but who would never, perhaps, see his face again.

" Just as the chaise was beginning to sink, help arrived. He was rescued, God be praised! and spared to make the best of husbands to

that same young damsel, and to be a good friend, and a kind master, and a faithful Christian man, serving God and his fellow-creatures, through a long, long life."

Grandmamma here wiped a tear from her cheek, and closing her eyes sank back to repose after the exertion of relating such a long history.

Mary kissed her, and sitting down at her feet on her footstool, thought over all she had heard ; looking up now and then at the dear old face which still wore the soft expression cast over it by the remembrance of past happiness, even after slumber had fallen on the weary eyelids.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CONFLAGRATION.

GRANDPAPA came to see the children at their own house next day, which was an unusual circumstance, for he had taken so strong a dislike to Miss Chisel, that he would not go where there was the risk of meeting her.

To-day, however, he had conceived a bright thought, and he wanted Bob to go with him to a shop, in order to carry it into effect. He would purchase a little box or two of the size

he intended to make his bricks, and use them for moulds. So he and his faithful admirer set off together in search of the desired boxes.

When Bob came back he told a marvellous tale about the proceedings of the old gentleman.

"Mamma, we been to toy-shop, and we bought such lot of boxes. Sis dunnen nice ingle boxes ; got lids to come off so (slipping his hands one over the other) ; and you do so, and they won't come off at all!"

"What do you mean, Bob," said his mother ; "I wish you would try to speak plain. I cannot tell what you are talking about."

"Granpapa go to a shop," began Bob, speaking very slowly, "and granpapa say, 'Me want a box, so big, and him have a lid to come off so.' And woonga (woman) say, 'Here a box.' 'No,' granpa say, 'that won't do.' And she bring nother. 'No.' Then granpa see two boxes, very pretty ingle ones, and 'em lids come off, so. And I try, and lid stick on, and him won't come off. And woonga laugh. She say, 'Em punnen-boxes' (puzzle-boxes). Then granpa say, 'That just right size for my bricks. Make me sis dunnen.' And woonga say, 'Yes.' That's all."

"My dear, you had better call, and find out what it all means," said Mr. Besborough, who had come down to see them ; "probably the poor old man has given some unreason-

able order, and it would be best to learn what it is. I came round by the Cottage just now, thinking to find you there, and I met a procession of four brickmakers, each bearing a large basket on his shoulder, coming out of your father's door. On inquiry, it appears that he went this morning and purchased the clay with which the baskets were filled, which was ready prepared for making into bricks, and had it brought home to manufacture into the little bricks he is so infatuated about."

"How very vexatious it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Besborough; "what can we do to put an end to this whim?"

"Nothing, I think. And it is well it is so perfectly innocent an one. No worse evil, I trust, than the expenditure of whatever money your father may have in hand, will attend it. We must intreat your dear mother, though, to give him henceforth only very small sums at a time; for evil-intentioned people will find out his weakness, and lead him into a hundred follies, if he has money which they can get from him."

Mrs. Besborough went in the morning to the toyshop, and found that Bob's account of the transaction was quite correct, though his strange and imperfect language had confused the relation of it. Mr. Chillingworth had seen a puzzle money-box with a slide lid, the

trick of which of which was, that unless held in one particular way, the pressure was sure to start a spring which effectually prevented the lid from being removed. The price was eighteen-pence each ; and of these the old man had ordered six dozens.

The woman at the shop said that she intended to have sent to inform Mrs. Besborough of the order ; for it seemed impossible that ‘the poor old gentleman’ should really want so many.

Mrs. Besborough thanked the woman for her consideration, and purchased the two boxes which Mr. Chillingworth had seen. When she returned to the cottage she gave them to her father, who only remarked, “Ah, they were the very thing. Yes, capital ; he’d go and begin the bricks directly, without even waiting for Bob.”

When the children went to see him in the afternoon, they found that he had been at work very busily, though without much success. Several days were spent by him and his young assistants in this employment, and they made and stacked a great many bricks ; but unfortunately without producing any thing like a shapely one. Every day, yesterday’s batch was found to be as complete a failure as those of preceding ones, and utterly unfit for any architectural purpose.

" My dear," said the old gentleman to Mary, " it is not for myself that I care about these little delays. My time is not particularly occupied just now, and I can very well spare a few hours every day ; and if I don't succeed perfectly to-day, of course I shall to-morrow. I feel for you, my dear."

" Pray do not mind me, grandpapa," replied Mary ; " I had much rather give up having the house, since it gives you so much trouble, and vexes—that is, I had rather give it up. Indeed, I had *much* rather."

" Oh, never fear, Mary, you shall have your house, and such a one as few little ladies, probably none, ever had before ! None of your paltry bits of wood, painted red and white to make-believe it is bricks ; but real bona-fide, sound, substantial walls, such as you might live in yourself, only you are rather too big.

" When I have done it thoroughly, my dear, I shall take out a patent, and the Queen—God bless her Majesty—will of course have eight or ten of my houses for the royal children. And all the nobility will want them. I should not wonder if the Emperor of China had one, and caused all sorts of little china vessels to be made on purpose for it, of the proper size. Of course in that case, he will send me a couple of sets. His Majesty could not do less, my dear."

So he rambled on ; happy in the anticipation of his imaginary triumphs.

At length even his sanguine spirit began to weary of continued failures, and he then brought men in from the brickfields to assist him. These men quickly made his little bricks ; but they induced him to give them so much beer, that they became very troublesome and noisy, and caused Mrs. Besborough some alarm before she could get rid of them.

It appeared afterwards, that a part of the performances of these men, had been to arrange a kiln to burn the little bricks in, and either by inadvertence or in vulgar sport, they had laid the plan on a scale much too large for the tiny things which were to be burned therein.

One day was all that Mr. Chillingworth's slender stock of patience could afford, for drying the bricks in the air ; and late in the evening he finished building them into his kiln, with the help of the children, and left them by Mrs. Besborough's desire 'till morning.'

But Mr. Chillingworth's notion of morning was more literal than his daughter's, and he rose at half-past four it seems, crept down stairs, set light to his pile, and returned to bed to lie till six o'clock, at which hour he frequently got up.

When Mrs. Besborough awoke, she was

sensible of a very unpleasant odour, and before she was ready to go down stairs, the garden was full of smoke, and the house also, and it began to penetrate even to Mrs. Chillingworth's room.

Mrs. Besborough did not like to interfere with this crowning pleasure, but she earnestly hoped the burning would be the last act in the performance ; and in truth it proved so.

She walked down the garden to try and ascertain how long the nuisance was likely to continue, and saw several of the neighbours looking out of their back-windows, doubtless much disgusted by the smother and smoke, and the smell of rapidly burning clay ; but their old neighbour had the good-will of every one who knew any thing about him, and they would not complain of the little mistakes into which he fell in his dotage.

Just as Mrs. Besborough came up with her father, the entire kiln gave way. The fierce heat had burned away the lower part, and the whole structure fell to pieces ; bright flames darted through the mound of rubbish like fiery tongues, and the wind which unfortunately was brisk, caught up the flaming straw and wafted it to the palings, against which lay Mr. Chillingworth's store of combustibles.

The heap of straw of course instantly ignited, and the old boards of which the paling was

composed were on fire in less than a minute afterwards ; and the flames spread with alarming rapidity.

Happily there was help at hand, for the men in the adjacent houses were not yet departed to the city, and they came running down their gardens and jumped the low walls and palings, prompt to render all possible aid to Mr. Chillingworth's family in their jeopardy.

To break down a part of the fence was but the work of a moment, and pails and water-pots poured a plentiful supply of water on the flames. Great alarm was felt lest the tool-shed should take fire, in which case there was little chance of saving the dwelling-house. This misfortune was happily averted, and by great exertions the conflagration was arrested before more damage was done, than the loss of some few feet of paling, and a couple of days' work for a gardener to restore order and neatness to the garden into which the burning fence had fallen, and which had been trampled by the feet of the zealous amateur firemen, who had done such good service in extinguishing the flames.

So ended grandpapa's magnificent architectural attempts.

CHAPTER IX.

WORN OUT!

MARY and Ridley came to see their grandmamma a few hours after the catastrophe just narrated had occurred.

She told them that she had been much alarmed by the noises which she heard, and by the smell of the fire; but had been endeavouring to compose her mind since, and to dwell only on the goodness of the ALMIGHTY, in preserving her and her husband from any real injury or vexation, in consequence of the accident.

She manifested great anxiety to guard against the children's conceiving any disrespectful ideas about their grandfather's mental infirmities.

"I have been much grieved, dear children," said she, "to find that your grandpapa's intellect has failed so rapidly since I have been ill. I was not aware that he was so greatly altered until a day or two since. It will be a trial to you, my loves, to avoid allowing yourselves to feel contempt and ridicule for his imbecility."

"Oh, dear grandmamma, how can you think so?" cried Mary, "we could not be so wicked."

"No, indeed, we never shall," said Ridley,

"we love grandpapa, dear, kind, old grandpapa."

"I know you do, my love," replied Mrs. Chillingworth, "but I know also that you may hardly be able to help laughing at the very odd things your poor old grandpapa imagines, and attempts to do. And you must be very cautious not to allow him to see this, and be pained by it."

"We will, indeed, be sure not to behave so badly," said Ridley, tears filling his sweet blue eyes; "do not think it, grandmamma; we could not be so wicked or so cruel. Papa would indeed, be angry, if he found us such ungrateful, unkind children."

"Yes, that's it, Ridley: ungrateful," said Mary, "for grandpapa has always been good to us. Even now, all this trouble came because he wanted to please me, only did not quite understand how to do it."

"You are right, my little Mary, and you will find if you think about it, that most of the odd things he does, are kindnesses carried too far, or done towards creatures not requiring them. His care that his cat should not take cold, for instance, when he ran the risk of getting the rheumatism himself, by running after Dick, lest he should hurt himself by staying out in the rain."

"I cannot think what makes him do such

odd things," said Ridley, " because he used to be more sensible, I know."

" His brain is worn out, I think," replied grandmamma.

" Then why does he not—oh, grandmamma ! I did not mean to say anything wrong."

" You were going to say, why does he not die ? I can only answer, my darling boy, because our LORD GOD sees fit that His aged servant should continue to exist after life has lost most of its sweets to him.

" Do you remember the words of S. Paul ? ' shall the thing formed, say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus ?'

" You know, my children, that it is by means of the five senses that we become aware of what is passing in the world around us. When the body grows old and feeble, the senses fail ; the eye no longer sees everything about us ; and the ear becomes dull of hearing : sweet smells do not give the pleasure they used to afford, and at last, as Barzillai said of himself to King David, we cannot even taste what we eat or what we drink.

" The case is somewhat as though there were a fine clever workman enclosed in a building furnished with windows of clear glass, through which he could look out on all around him, and his working inside could be seen by his fellows. By and by, the windows grow

dim ; they are covered with the dust of age, and scratched and defaced by many accidents. Then the workman can no longer look abroad, nor can he be seen within by other people ; for there is a thick barrier between him and the rest of the world. So he ceases to find new thoughts to work upon, and he is too weary and spent to put his old thoughts into new forms.

"Then, my dear children, his work for Earth is done, and we should reverently wait till our LORD GOD shall see fit to release his soul from its prison-house, and take him to a life where he will see, and know, and enjoy a thousand fold more than the wisest and most vigorous minded of men ever imagined even, while in this world."

"But, dear grandmamma," said Ridley, putting his arm round the old lady's neck, and laying his soft cheek to hers, "your windows are not dark—there is no dust on them ; and no marks of anything having injured them ! and you are almost as old as grandpapa. We can tell that the clever workman is busy in your house, and you let us *hear* him at his work too."

"My boy, the Great FATHER of us all does not lay the same burden on the last days of everybody. My house, you see, is weak at the foundation ! I cannot stand : like a crazy old

tenement, I am ready to fall, and only stand by the props which love and care provide for me to lean on. It will not be long, Ridley, before the shaky old building will be levelled with the ground ; and happy will it be for me in that day when my soul quits this earthly tabernacle, if I have no more sins to be forgiven, than have sullied the life of the dear, kind old man, your grandfather."

The children sat silent for a while, awed by the gentle seriousness of their grandmother's discourse ; while the old lady, with her hands on the little heads which had gradually crept closer and closer towards her, appeared wrapt in thought. Probably her prayers were ascending to the throne of the ALMIGHTY, for blessings on the beloved children at her knee ; asking for them that they might have grace given to them to use the greater mental powers which had been bestowed on them, with as much fidelity as the simple-minded, pure-hearted husband of her long life, had employed the lesser talent which had been entrusted to him.

CHAPTER X.

BOB'S NOTION OF GOOD MANNERS.

Miss Chisel's attentions to Bob still continued, but as yet had produced no effect on that sturdy little man. He did not like her, and no coaxing or bribery could win his regard. At last she told his papa that she wished much to take a likeness of him, for a picture of S. John the Baptist which she had begun to paint ; and the Rector promised to use his influence with the urchin, to induce him to gratify her. He would not insist on it, he said, but he dared say the boy would be good-natured about it, as he generally was about everything he had to do with.

"Bob, I wish you would let Miss Chisel paint a picture of you," said he, to the child, presently afterwards. "All you would have to do, would be to sit still a while. I do not insist on your doing it, because I know that your dislike to Miss Chisel is caused by her being unkind to her father, and to her poor little maid. But I shall be pleased if you go to her ; because it is right for *us* to do all the little kindnesses in our power, whether *other people* are as kind as they ought to be, or are not."

Bob fixed his great brown eyes full of grave speculation, on his papa for a few seconds;

" Me go and say to that nice old man up stair, You come too, and Bong Besbur go to Miss Chinnel. He sush nice kind old man."

And the little fellow trotted off to fetch his prime favourite, the old Sculptor.

For once even her father was welcome to the artist, since he served to reconcile Bob to the bore of sitting for his portrait. Mr. Besborough and Mary went also to see the arrangement for Bob's sitting.

The old sofa was covered with a green drapery, to give the hue intended to pervade the picture. S. John was to be represented in his father's garden, in Jerusalem, poring over a scroll of the Law, " It was a new idea, she thought ; he was always represented staring at his mother with great unmeaning eyes ; or hugging a great fat lamb, before he could possibly have understood the symbolical meaning attached to the creature. It was natural a boy should take to his father's pursuits, and the son of the Priest Zachariah would of course busy himself with the Law."

Mr. Besborough objected that the Jews did not instruct their children in religion, while so very young. But Miss Chisel replied, " that the child was a miracle altogether, and no doubt was miraculously clever."

The tone of her remarks was so displeasing to the Rector, that he left the studio, taking Mary with him.

Soon after they were gone, Bob began to wax impatient of the constraint; and Miss Chisel knowing by former experience in painting likenesses of children, that the best quietus usually is a plate of confectionery or fruit, brought out some delicate little cakes, and heaped several of them in Bob's lap. This time he accepted her offering very graciously, and began to munch one of them with evident satisfaction.

"Why don't you eat some, Mr. Chinnel?" said he, "'em very good."

The old man made an indistinct reply.

"Come and taste mine," said Bob, "why don't you give your papa some, I say, Miss Chinnel?"

"Old men ought to leave off wanting cakes, Mr. Bob, at least old men who won't work to earn them, need not want to eat other people's earnings."

"Oh you nassy unkind woonga," exclaimed Bob, jumping up and scattering his cakes right and left, "you rude woonga! to say your papa not eat your cakes! Oh, me won't sit here no longer to please you, you cross old woonga," and marching up to the astonished Mr. Chisel, he dragged him out of the room, crying,

"Come and have some cakes wive us : Mary so glad to give you cake, and she our house-keeper, you know. Come long—me bid you come long."

Miss Chisel never renewed her attempt to get a sitting of Bob, but the next time the Rector met her on the stairs, she said,

"Yours is a well-mannered little boy, Mr. Besborough!"

"I cannot apologize to you, Madam," replied he, "for my little boy's leaving you so abruptly. He is but a baby, and I will not risk lessening his reverence for age, and you must pardon my saying, his manly sense of the rudeness he witnessed, by making him apologize for his unceremonious expression of his feelings. It is far less important that he should be civil, than that he should feel rightly."

"You must have a fine idea of the dignity of old age," answered Miss Chisel with a sneer, "since you make such a grievance of its not having a bit of sweet cake."

"I need not tell you, Madam," responded the Rector, "that our life is made up of little events : and it is a consideration not beneath the attention of the finest intelligence, how we may afford little pleasures, and avoid inflicting little pains on every body around us. This applies still more to consideration for the aged, whose pleasures are necessarily so few, and

their pains so many. Our Blessed LORD thought it not unworthy His beneficence, to make an addition to the pleasures of a social festivity the occasion of His first public display of miraculous power. In tender love and dutiful care of the happiness of a parent, He is again our Exemplar ; His care for His mother called forth the last injunction which issued from His Blessed lips, ere He resigned Himself to death upon the Cross. And if you prefer to look amongst the wise and great of this world for example, take that of Solomon, who, it appears, did not consider that his wisdom or majesty released him from his tender relation of duty towards his mother ; for it is recorded, that when Bathsheba came to seek an interview with him, ‘ he rose up to meet her ; and the king bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right hand.’ ”

CHAPTER XI.

LUCY CHISEL.

THE first month of the holidays was over, and so pleasantly had it passed, that every one

of the party felt some regret at the shortness of the time still left to be spent at Princes Green.

During this period, much conversation had been held between Mr. Besborough and the old sculptor, respecting the unfortunate grandchild of the latter. There could be no hope of exciting in the breast of her aunt more humane sentiments towards the unhappy girl; and to leave her in her present state of ignorance and misery was not to be thought of.

Many efforts had been made to talk a little with the poor girl, in order to ascertain what her intellectual capacity might be; but Miss Chisel always contrived to frustrate these attempts, and the Besboroughs would not risk bringing her wrath on her helpless victim, by persisting to notice her.

Nurse, who was a shrewd personage as well as a conscientious and good woman, had talked to the girl, and she was of opinion that Lucy Chisel had very good natural abilities, though she was more ignorant than any one nurse had ever met with before. Shut up alone in that underground kitchen from her early childhood until now, where was the wretched child to acquire new ideas, or become acquainted with the simplest rules of life?

"Dear, ma'am," said nurse, "she don't know anything! I saw her yesterday poring over a

scrap of paper, it was a bit of a picture of a ship in full sail, ‘ La !’ says she, ‘ what’s that ? have they been washing in that big boat, and hung all their clothes out to dry ?’ And a few days since, when that brass band was playing something very grand before the door, I was in our kitchen, and she came in, and said in her common way of speaking, ‘ La ! how lovely ! O my, it sounds—it sounds like thunder and lightning singing.’”

“ That was a strange remark for that child to make,” said Mr. Besborough to his wife. “ I think it probable she inherits some of the artist qualities of her grandfather. Her face is very interesting, though not handsome, and I think expresses an uncommon character. However, we must not trust to that, but content ourselves with putting her in the way of Christian instruction, and having her taught a trade by which she can earn her own living independently. This will be best done, I feel convinced, by apprenticing her to good Mrs. Brown the straw bonnet maker, who will be more like a mother to her, than any one she has known these seven years past.”

“ I quite agree with you, as you know,” said his wife, “ and I wish it could be arranged at once. My mother told Mary yesterday, that she will give her twenty pounds, that she may have the happiness of befriending poor

little Lucy. I suppose that will be sufficient for Mrs. Brown?"

"O yes. It is like all your mother's actions, kind and judicious. I will go at once and settle with the old man."

Mr. Besborough mounted two flights of stairs, and then, guided by Bob's description of Mr. Chisel's room, found his way to it. Three other doors were open on the landing place, none of the rooms seeming to be inhabited, except that in which the old man existed.

Nothing could be more poverty-struck and wretched than the apartment of the forlorn old man. Some of the little diamond shaped panes in the casements were broken, and their place supplied by bits of paper wafered up to the leaden frame. A bed covered by a coarse rug in place of a counterpane, two old chairs with rush bottoms, and a little round table formed the chief part of the furniture. A couple of old coats hung on pegs, and as many pairs of very much worn shoes stood beneath them.

The old man did not perceive the entrance of his visitor, for he was lying on his face on his bed, uttering low moans expressive of terrible bodily suffering.

"What is the matter with you, my friend?" said Mr. Besborough, laying his hand on the

shoulder of the sufferer. "Can I help you ? you seem to be in great pain."

"No,—no,—thank you. No one can help me ! Pray don't stay—don't afflict yourself by looking on sufferings you cannot relieve. You do feel,—so does your wife,—so do those blessed children."

"Surely something might be done for you ! Have you medical advice ?"

"Yes, long ago. Nothing will do me good. Go now,—pray go."

"I will, but I shall return by and by."

In about an hour Mr. Besborough returned, bringing a cup of strong, hot coffee. The smell seemed grateful to the poor old man ; for he took it eagerly, inhaled the fragrance with rapture, and then drank it.

His face relaxed from its painful expression and he said the relief was magical. Then he drew up his long legs on to the bed and raising himself a little on his elbow, got into "a conversable position," as he called it. He soon alluded to his grandchild, and said that his anxieties on Lucy's account increased daily. Mr. Besborough then told him what had passed between his wife and himself on the subject of Lucy being apprenticed to Mrs. Brown.

After some discussion it was resolved that Mr. Besborough should demand the little girl

of her aunt, in the name of her grandfather, and inform her that it was Mr. Chisel's intention, as her natural guardian, to take her wholly under his own protection, and that she was to be disposed of in the way already mentioned. Mr. Chisel felt unequal to the contest which was certain to ensue whenever this demand was made of his daughter, and thankfully accepted the offer of Mr. Besborough, to transact the affair for him. He said that until the child was placed under legal protection he should have no rest or peace ; for his own life was precarious, and if he died before Lucy was duly apprenticed, no one could interfere between her and her aunt, without there were grounds for a charge of positive cruelty and injury. If apprenticed by her grandfather for seven years, she would be secured from the authority of her aunt till she became of age, when she would, of course, be irresponsible to her. The child's own pension would pay for her board till able to earn her living with Mrs. Brown ; and the little Besboroughs had undertaken to pay for her schooling.

"No time like the present," said the good Rector, at the conclusion of his talk with Lucy's grandfather. "I will go at once, and get this matter settled. Keep yourself quiet ; nothing can prevent your exercising this

authority over your grandchild. Good-bye for the present."

The scene which ensued when Mr. Besborough made known to Miss Chisel the intentions of her father relative to his grandchild, was of so painful a character, that it would afford no entertainment to any right minded person to read a very particular account of it.

She raved and screamed with fury. She shook her hand menacingly towards Mr. Besborough, and, absolutely trembling with rage, uttered a hundred silly threats of what she would do in vengeance of this intolerable interference with her rights.

The Rector was proof against her vituperation, and did all in his power to bring the exasperated woman into a more reasonable state of mind.

But Miss Chisel would not hear reason. She would turn "the whole pack, father, girl, lodgers and all out of doors on the instant;" however, her master passion, avarice, forbade the execution of that threat.

Then she would lock "that brat" up on bread and water for many and many a long month to come; but she was reminded that in England there are laws, and means of putting them in force for the protection of the young and helpless.

Then she would beat her black and blue; but she was informed the grandfather would not permit her to be beaten.

After raving in this foolish fashion till she had tired herself, she was made to understand that in the course of the next week, Lucy would be removed to Mrs. Brown's, and that Mr. Besborough would himself convey her and her grandfather there, and see all the requisite arrangements made for her.

It may be as well to state here, that during the few days which intervened between that on which these conversations were held, and that on which Lucy left her aunt's house, Miss Chisel contrived to render the life of both the girl and her grandfather so miserable, that Mr. Besborough resolved to remove them both at once, and with the assistance of Mrs. Brown to place them in neat, decent lodgings, in which the old man and his child might be together. Their small incomes united would enable them to live, and there was reason to hope that they would thus enjoy more happiness than had ever yet fallen to the lot of Lucy or perhaps to that of her grandfather.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOOD DOG TRUSTY.

IT must not be imagined that while all this was transacting, the little Besboroughs were without amusement, or even without their little troubles.

They enjoyed many pleasant rambles with their papa, and Ridley, who had begun to swim a little, greatly delighted in that exercise, and enticed his father to the river on all possible opportunities.

The swing was still occasionally resorted to, but there is a sameness in the motion which soon tires lively people, so it was not a very favourite amusement, with anybody but Rose.

The old elm had however contributed to the entertainment of the children in other ways, besides supporting their swing. The trunk was hollow, and out of this circumstance they made an enormous lot of fun.

In every game which their lively fancies originated, this same old tree was sure to bear a part. Like Miss Chisel's coloured shawls hung over her old screen, it formed the background of all their pictures.

Sometimes it was a Bandit's cave; and terrible marauders rushed out on peaceable pas-

sengers—women with babies probably, or young girls wandering alone—and bore them from sight, into the hideous recesses of their cavern-home.

Another time probably it became Stirling Castle. Mary (of Scots, of course) sitting all desolate within, while valiant heroes rush to the rescue and besiege the fortress.

Then an enchanted castle was the scene of action : and the old hollow trunk became the strong hold of a wizard ; and giants and dwarfs issued from the wonderful abode.

So in many various ways this ancient tree helped to furnish out the scenery of their sports, and the place rang with pleasant peals of laughter, and fun and frolic changed the desolate neglected garden, into a cheerful play ground.

Where is there a spot so desolate and unlovely that good humour and playfulness cannot convert it into a cheerful scene ?

But though the weather had been so fine for the last month, that the little Londoners had almost forgotten the possibility of a wet day coming to interrupt their out-of-doors amusements, come it did at last, and in earnest too ! There was not an interval of sunshine sufficient to admit of the little Besboroughs even running down the village to their grandpapa's cottage until after dinner.

Then a gleam of sunshine did appear, and the boys, arming themselves with an umbrella in case of another shower, splashed through the mud to the cottage; enjoying as boys always do, to tread on the soft wet gravel; and hardly able to resist the temptation to jump into the puddles, and to give a good shake to the branches of the dripping trees, which overhung the pathway.

They found the grandpapa sitting in his old fashioned arm-chair in his ‘parlour’ taking a nap, to while away the rainy afternoon. Dick, his fine great cat, lay in his lap, purring very loudly, and lazily waving his long tail as it hung over his master’s knee.

One does not often see a prettier picture of an old man, than grandpapa and his cat made that day.

The old gentleman had on his head what Ridley always called his ‘garment of fringes;’ which was no other than a small crochet mat, which he had taken a fancy to appropriate as a covering for his bald pate, when disposed to sleep, in order to protect it from a visitation of flies, for whom its shining surface seemed to have extraordinary attraction. From beneath this very peculiar head gear, the handsome face of the old man appeared to singular advantage.

His complexion was as pure red and white,

as a boy's of twelve years old ; he had a delicately formed aquiline nose ; very carefully preserved little whiskers ; and a set of teeth which a man of half his age might have regarded with envy.

The boys under Susan's guidance, crept in so quietly that they did not disturb his slumber, but very shortly afterwards one of those persevering little enemies, the flies, seemed resolved to effect a lodgment somewhere else, if prevented from coursing over his smooth crown, and came, and most impudently perched upon the very bridge of grandpapa's nose ! The old gentleman started up with a sneeze so loud that it fairly drove Dick from his knees, and made the boys burst into a shout of laughter.

" Ah, my boys," cried grandpapa, " I didn't know you were here ; I've had a very remarkable dream. I dreamt that I was riding with Nancy—that is, your grandmamma—and there came an extraordinary high wind, and Nancy could hardly keep her little white hat on her head. I said to her, My dear, I'll tie it on for you with my neckcloth, and I'd just taken it off for that purpose, when the wind blew such a puff of powder out of her hair that it came all into my face and set me sneezing so that I waked."

" Oh, grandpapa," cried Bob, " that was a

fly on your nose ! ha ! ha ! Granpapa dream it 'a powder.' ”

“ Well, my dear boys, I'm glad you're here ; I should have been sorry else to wake, for I was in very pleasant scenes, and days which come but once in a life.”

“ Was grandmamma riding her pretty black mare, in your dream ? ” said Ridley, “ that one in the picture that hangs over the sofa.”

“ Yes ; and Trusty was there too.”

“ Oh, granpapa, do tell us something 'bout Trusty. Me so fond to hear 'bout him.”

“ Ah, you don't see such dogs as he, in these days, Bob ! Did I ever tell you about his saving my life ? Well, then ; once upon a time (grandpapa always commenced thus) : once upon a time, I was walking in the meadows at Wetherbridge, and it being very hot, I thought that a plunge in the river would be mighty pleasant. Trusty, you are to know, was with me.”

“ Yes, granpapa.”

“ There were some willows at the water's edge, and there I took off my clothes and laid them down, bidding Trusty take care of them ; and he lay down upon them immediately. With that, I jumped into the water, and swam about, enjoying the coolness of the river amazingly.

“ Presently it came into my head, like a

young fool as I was, to try what Trusty would do if I was drowning. So I hallooed out Trusty, Trusty, help, dog—help, Trusty! Up he jumps in a moment, makes one bound into the middle of the stream, and swims straight up to me, opens his great mouth, and catches me by my hair as tight as if I'd been in a vice. We young blades wore our hair as long as a woman's in those days. Well; Trusty caught tight hold enough of mine, and tugged and dragged me to the bank with such force, that I thought every hair would have been torn out of my head. It was of no use for me to cry out to him to 'let go.' The more I hallooed, the more the rascal tugged and tore; and at last he had me out on the bank, and left me to rub my head, and try to ease the pain as well as I could, the while he jumped and bounded and tore round and round like a mad thing; so delighted with himself for having pulled his master out of the water!

"In a minute, however, I suppose he thought to himself, 'bless me! where's the clothes!' for he started off, and went and threw himself down upon the heap of my things; and the water out of his long black and white hair drained into my drab-coloured coat and peach blossom silk waistcoat and small clothes, and made them such figures I never could put any of them, but the coat, on again."

" Didn't you love old Trusty, granpapa, eong he so kind to you ? "

" Yes, Bob ; but there was another person, sir, who loved Mr. Trusty for that reason. A certain young lady, sir."

" Oh, grandmamma, I know," said Ridley, nodding his head knowingly.

" It was before we were married, sir ; but I made mention of it in my next letter, and a very pretty little letter she writ in reply, God bless her, saying very nice things about what had happened. And when we were married she always made much of Trusty, I can assure you, and the cunning rascal knew very well that he was a favourite. Why, I remember, as if it was but yesterday—it's astonishing how good my memory is—that in the summer after our marriage, we were riding one beautiful day along a green lane. Well ; it came into our heads to try whether, if one of us kept Trusty in talk, if I may say so, and the other dropped a glove or a whip, and then if we sent him by and by to look for it, he would find it and bring it back to its owner. Nancy said she did not believe he would know which of us it belonged to, and besides, he would never find her glove, for she would manage so cleverly, he should never know where to look for it. Well, sir ; she dropped her glove, and in proper time I sent Trusty for it. The dog found

it, and brought it back to his mistress in his mouth as proud as a lord. Then I threw away my whip, and he found that. At last Nancy said, I bet you a wager he cannot find my glove another time, and of course I said ‘done,’ as one always does to a lady, whatever she chooses to lay. The bet was a fine pair of riding gloves. Well; Nancy made me ride on a little way, taking Trusty with me, and then she flung her glove right over a hedge into a clover field. Up she came, cantering, looking like a rose, pretty dear, so pleased with her bit of fun, and bantering me about her gloves, which, forsooth, must be real true Limerick, and no other.

“ It does not take much to amuse two young creatures in love with one another, riding on good horses, under the LORD’s summer sky.”

The old man sighed. Bob sat looking up into his face, not half comprehending the narrative, but wholly absorbed in the attempt to do so.

“ Where was I? Oh! I recollect. Well; Trusty went back to look for grandmamma’s glove. He was so long gone Nancy began to laugh at me, saying, she should win the wager; but just then Trusty’s great deep voice was heard. Bow wow, bow wow! how he did give tongue! Bow, wow, wow!! there was something amiss, sure enough.

“ When we came up to the spot where Nancy

had tossed her glove away—for of course we went back to see what was the matter—Trusty jumped out of the hedge, and tore about, and almost pulled me off my horse. Then he went to Nancy, and dragged at her habit and shook it; then he dashed into the hedge again; and then came out and at me again. It was clear he wanted me in that field. So I got off my horse, and pushing through the hedge, saw Trusty standing over something red that lay on the ground.

“ Well, my dear, of course I went up to it, and what should it be but a red cloak, or at least a bit of one, with a fine little babby in it fast asleep, about two years old, not a thread of clothing on it, stark naked as the day it was born.”

“ Oh, grandpapa, what had happened to it ?” said Ridley.

“ I’ll tell you, my boy. Let’s see—no—I’m put out—hm, hmm—where was I ?”

“ Bout poor ingle bavy in a red cloak, grandpapa.”

“ Ah ! I remember. Well, my dear, I took up the child, and it waked up, poor little thing, and began to cry. With that Nancy jumped off her horse, and put her face through the hedge : and when she saw the child in my arms, she scrambled through somehow and came and took it, and kissed it, and made

much of it, as young women do, God bless them.

"Well, we didn't know what to do about it. Nancy said we must take it home, and I thought so too. Trusty ran across the field, and seemed wild about something; so Nancy wrapped the babby up as well as she could, and held it, while I followed the dog to see what would turn up next."

"Yes, granpapa," cried Bob, almost breathless with impatience.

"There was not far to go, for in the next field but one there was plenty to show who had been there. Gipsies! of course. There was not a creature there then; but you could see where their fires had been, and many other signs of what sort of company had been there. While I was looking about, Trusty scoured the field in all directions, and presently returned with a rag of a babby's shirt in his mouth. It was scorched, and had no doubt been put to burn, but had been carried away by the wind into some dock-leaves. There was part of a mark on it, an L and another letter or two, burnt too much to be read.

"I put it in my pocket, and went back to Nancy, and we rode home, carrying the babby with us.

"As soon as Nancy had got it safe at home I raised a hue and cry, and I and some

other gentlemen rode most of that night in search of the scamps ; but nothing of them could we discover then nor afterwards."

" Oh, grandpapa, did you never know whose baby it was ?"

" Yes, my boy. She was the child of a widow lady who lived in the next county, Mrs. Landmarsh. It seems that Colonel Landmarsh had been to the Indies, and he and his wife brought home loads of fine shawls and jewels, and smart things. And the Colonel died, after which the widow could never do enough to spoil the babby with all sorts of nonsense. She dressed it, pretty dear, in all the finery she could put upon it, and jewels all about it, like a grown lady. The gipsies got wind of it, and came and watched their time, and stole it."

" Oh, how dreadful !" burst from Ridley.

" There was not such a police then, Ridley, as we have now, and things were done in lone country places, which now would come to light in a few hours. It was near two months before we found to whom the babby belonged, and Nancy had taken to it, just as if it was her own."

" Oh, good Trusty !" cried Bob ; " now him was good dog, to find poor ingle bavy."

" I've always thought, my boy, that the LORD sent us there to find that poor little

thing, as it lay there deserted and lone, out of love to my dear wife ! It might have been me ; or it might have been Tom Nokes, or Jack Styles, who found the little one, you know ; but the LORD put my Nancy in the way to save it, because He loved her, and would give the gentlest, and sweetest, and dearest of women, the joy of saving that babbie, and bringing back peace and happiness to the widow whose only one it was."

After grandpapa's story was ended they went up stairs, and told how kind he had been, and what a fine story he had told them—a real good one !

" And grandmamma," added Ridley, " it was almost like one of yours. Grandpapa seemed so sensible, you know."

" He has been much more himself these last few days," answered she ; " and to-day the rain has kept him indoors, and he is not fatigued with stooping about in his garden. Besides this, these tales of old times carry back his thoughts to that part of his life when his actions were always those of a right-minded, simple-hearted gentleman ; and his mind is refreshed by the pleasant thoughts that arise out of the remembrance of good and graceful deeds.

" I think, my best one, that grandpapa's mind is somewhat in the same state as my

eyes ! When I am not quite so well as usual, the daylight dazzles me, and makes everything appear confused. When the evening comes I can see very well ; the calm twilight refreshes my eyes, and I can see the beautiful silent stars shining in the blue heavens, and enjoy the loveliness of the sight.

“ The present time is grandpapa’s daylight, and dazzles him. When his thoughts are with the past, the pure simple life he has to remember, is like the calm evening sky, and the memory of tender thoughts and good deeds, like the sweet fair stars peeping out of its depths. He can look steadily up to the gentle heavens, and a little of the grace of former years revives under the influence of their serene beauty.”

CHAPTER XIII.

PLAYING TRUANT.

MR. BESBOROUGH brought charming accounts of Lucy Chisel and her grandfather to Princes Green. Already the change in their mode of life began to produce a favourable alteration in them both.

The old man suffered less pain now that his personal comforts were better attended to,

and Lucy was beginning to manifest a very affectionate disposition, and to devote herself with great earnestness to provide for his comfort by every means in his power.

She kept their rooms very clean and tidy, and took prodigious pride in the little possessions which the old man's savings enabled them to obtain. In her long years of servitude she had learned several things, which were now of great importance to the comfort of her grandfather and herself. She could cook their little meals nicely, keep the rooms in order, and wash and iron their clothes.

Mrs. Brown was a person who shaped her transactions as nearly as she knew how, to the Gospel rule; and when she accepted the young Lucy as her apprentice, it was with the full purpose of doing a motherly part towards the orphan girl. Finding Lucy disposed to profit by the indulgence, she allowed her time enough to perform all her household labours for her grandfather and herself, and frequently herself walked to Lucy's lodging after her shop was closed for the night, to see that the young girl executed her many duties with propriety.

As yet Lucy had not attended the Sunday-school, as both her grandfather and Mr. Besborough thought it best, that she should gain some little knowledge from Mr. Chisel,

before she was placed in contact with other better instructed children.

The little Besboroughs missed the old man much, especially Bob, who had closely allied himself to his aged favourite.

Bob had some indistinct notion of taking care of the old man, and of protecting him from the aggressions of his ill-conditioned daughter; and Bob's sympathies were certain to be enlisted in the cause of anyone whom he fancied himself able to befriend.

It happened one afternoon, about a week before the expiration of their sojourn at Holbein House, that Ridley and Bob went alone to amuse themselves in the fields behind the Church, and particularly to fish for tittlebats and minnows, a sport in which Bob took great delight. They returned just in time for tea; but Ridley called Mary aside before he prepared for that meal, to listen to something he desired to impart to her in confidence.

"Mary, do you think it would be wrong to borrow five shillings out of the house-purse?" said he; "I want it very much."

"Yes, dear, I think it would be very wrong; don't you? It is not ours, you know, in reality."

"No, of course not; but I meant only to borrow it. I have money, you know, at home."

"I don't think one ought to touch money that belongs to other people. Papa and mamma are other people, just as much as strangers."

"Yes, Mary, you are right. It is just what I knew all the while, only I wanted not to know it; and so I asked you, hoping you might not see it as I did."

"But what do you want five shillings for, Ridley? So much money!"

"Not for myself, Polly. You won't tell, I know, dear, if I ask you not, so I will tell you all about it.

"When Bob and I were in the fields, down by the Brook, I caught sight of Sainsworthy, one of our boys, hiding in a hedge. I called to him; but he didn't come to me. So I went after him, and he ran famously! However I got up with him at last, and you can't guess what he has been doing?"

"Do tell me, Ridley."

"He and Harrowby have run away from home! Their friends live at Esherbys, in Derbyshire, and they have left them and come up to London, to get berths on board the ships which are going to be sent to the Crimea."

"Don't their fathers and mothers know where they are? How dreadfully frightened they must be about them if they don't!"

"Nobody knows. They had twelve pounds

when they started ; but a man who saw them with a bank-note for ten pounds, got them to let him have it to get changed. He gave them five sovereigns, and said he would fetch the rest ; but he never came back, and the five sovereigns are bad ones.”

“ Where did they get the money from ? Twelve pounds ! Why Harrowby is not more than thirteen he told me, just before the holidays. How old is Sainsworthy ? ”

“ About twelve. Harrowby had the money to pay a bill for his father ; and so they thought they would use it, and when they had got on board ship they meant to write home and tell all about it, and tell Harrowby’s father to get his money out of the Savings’ Bank, and pay himself.”

“ Whose money ? ”

“ Why, don’t you understand ? Harrowby’s own money. He has fifteen pounds in a savings’ bank.”

“ Don’t you think it’s all very bad, Ridley ? ”

“ Yes, Mary dear, very wicked, I call it. And I told them so ; I saw Harrowby afterwards, and then I found they had not a penny to get a supper, nor a bed ; and so I said if they would wait where they were, I would come and get some money for them, for I knew you would give me what you had in *your own purse*, and I have a shilling.”

"Oh yes, of course I will. But Ridley, you ought to tell mamma. I am sure you ought."

"I should be very glad to tell her, for she would know what ought to be done; but they made me promise *on my honour* not to tell, and so I cannot."

"But if they should get lost?"

"Oh, they won't be lost. But I think how dreadful it must be for their friends! Harrowby has no brothers nor sisters, and his father and mother make such a fuss with him! You should see the letters, and the cakes and things I have seen him receive from home, when I have been to tea with him at his cousin's, where he lives, you know."

"Oh, do tell mamma! I know you ought."

"No, I can't, Mary. A boy must not break his word of honour. Who would believe me afterwards?"

"What shall we do, then? Here is all my money, a sixpence and a fourpenny-piece—will that do with your shilling?"

"Well, you see it must. They want to sleep at a public-house very near here, if they can get money enough. A shilling for a bed, and another for breakfast, and they must do without supper, they said."

"Bob has some pence in his pocket, I know. There he is in the garden; I'll run and ask him to give them to me."

Bob gave Mary all he had, with his usual good nature ; it was three pence halfpenny. Bob was standing quite still, with his thumb in his mouth (great baby) looking very grave, and very much puzzled. He evidently could not make out to his own satisfaction, what was going on ; but had an uneasy feeling of something being wrong.

Mary returned with the money, and then proposed to send them something to eat.

" That is our own, you know, Ridley, and mamma will be sure to approve of our giving it to them. You know when we sent the dinner to the sick woman, she said, we were to do as we liked. What we thought right, supposing we had paid for the food with our own money."

Mary went to nurse, and told her she wanted a basket of supper for two school-fellows of Ridley's, who were here in the fields.

Nurse asked why they did not come in to have it ? Mary said, Ridley was going to take it to them in the fields.

" Oh ! out cricketing, I suppose," said nurse. " Who are they ?"

Mary did not wish to say, and she would not tell an untruth. While she was considering what to reply, nurse appeared to forget her question ; for she began to cut sandwiches,

and fetched some fruit pasties Martha had made that day, and added a couple to her paper of sandwiches.

"Mr. Ridley, of course, knows whether they are boys your papa would like him to be much with. But anyhow, it can't hurt to give them a meal. This will do nicely. Ask Mr. Ridley to bring the basket back."

"No, no: put it in paper, nurse," cried Ridley, from the top of the stairs. "I don't want to be bothered with a basket."

"What fidgety things boys are, to be sure!" exclaimed nurse. "Well, here it is."

"Wait in the garden for me, Mary," said her brother, "I shall not be many minutes gone. I am to put the money under a stone, just by the Church gate, in the lane, you know, and as soon as my back is turned, they will come and take it."

Mary wondered why they could not take it from Ridley without all this secrecy. She was not a lover of mystery. She went into the garden, where Bob still was. He moved off to a further corner, when he saw her, and seemed still deep in thought.

Ridley returned very soon, and joined his sister in the garden; and almost immediately afterwards, their father arrived from London. He looked tired and uneasy.

"Ridley, I want to know if you can help

me in an inquiry I am requested to make ;" said he. " Do you know anything of your schoolfellows, Harrowby and Sainsworthy ? They are missing : and Harrowby's cousin has been to me, to ask if you can give any hint which may lead to his finding out where they are most likely to have gone."

" Papa," said Ridley, " will you tell me something ? If you make a promise on your honour to keep a secret, and you see afterwards that it will do harm to keep it ; ought you to keep it ? or ought you to tell it, and so break your word ?"

" Certainly, you ought to tell it. If you see that some wrong is going to be done, or that some wrong has been done, and that the consequences of it could be remedied by the fact being known, you become positively guilty if you conceal what you know."

" I know where Sainsworthy and Harrowby are, papa. Must I tell you ?"

" Consider, and try to discover what is right. If you knew a man meant to murder another, would you keep that secret ?"

" No, papa. I think I should be helping to murder the man, if I knew he was going to be killed, and did not tell of it."

" And if you knew a man had killed another, would you keep that secret, and so let the

murderer go at large, and be able to kill others if he chose?"

"No, papa. But this is different."

"The principle is the same, Ridley. Is it right to keep or to break a promise, when by keeping it you will assist in a crime; or by breaking it, could prevent one; or help to lessen the ill consequences which follow the commission of one."

Ridley pondered very seriously, but did not reply for some time. Then he said—

"I think it must be wrong to keep a promise, when so much mischief would come of its being kept."

"Right, my boy. Now tell me, is it wrong to disobey parents?"

"Yes, papa, very wicked."

"Is it wrong to take money which does not belong to you?"

"Very wrong indeed, papa."

"Sainsworthy and Harrowby have run away from home, and stolen money which belonged to Harrowby's father. Now these are two great crimes. They cannot be undone, but other crimes may be committed in consequence of them; and the only way in which the evil can be lessened, is by the boys being sent back immediately. They will get into more sin and trouble if they are not; and for this part, you will be the person to

blame, if, knowing where they are, you refuse to tell."

"But, papa, how could we ever trust anybody's promise, if we knew that he would afterwards take it into his head, perhaps, that what we had told him was not right to be kept; and so that he might repeat it?"

"By never doing anything, Ridley, which the plain commands of God, and our own conscience, teach us it is a crime to do. We shall then have nothing to tell of our past deeds, or of our future intentions, which is *criminal*: and it is only in that case that another would be justified in repeating what he had promised to conceal."

"I think I understand that."

"Let us make sure of it, my boy. You cannot be bound by a promise, to do anything, or to assist another in doing anything which is contrary to God's Commandments.

"What is the fifth commandment?"

"Honour thy father and thy mother."

"Does this imply obedience to their wishes?"

"Yes, papa, certainly."

"What is the eighth commandment?"

"Thou shalt not steal."

"Whose property?"

"We may not steal anybody's property, papa."

"Then by the rule we have laid down, a boy

must not run away from his parents in order to do what they have forbidden : nor take their money which was entrusted to him for a particular purpose—and which they believed he would use for that purpose and no other—and spend it in doing the very thing he had been forbidden to do.”

“Going to sea, do you mean, papa?”

“Yes ; that was the thing in this case. Now I am sure you see your duty. Do it.”

“Harrowby and Sainsworthy are at a public house just by here, papa.”

“How long have you known of this affair?”

“Only just before you came in, papa. Bob and I were out in the fields by the brook, and I saw Sainsworthy hiding in a hedge. He ran away when he saw me, but I caught him. Bob did not see him, for he was busy fishing for minnows.”

“What were they doing out here?” asked Mr. Besborough.

“I don’t know why they came here. When they had told me what they had done, they wanted me to lend them some money to get a bed, and breakfast to-morrow ; and to pay their fare to Woolwich. They want to go there, to try and get berths on board ships going to the Crimea.”

“Have you given them any money, my boy?”

"Yes, papa, a little more than two shillings, for that was all we had of our own. Harrowby asked me to get five shillings; and I think, papa, I should have done almost what they did, but for Mary; for I wished very much to borrow some of the housekeeping money, till I could get some of my own to repay it. But I asked Mary what she thought about it, and she said it would be wrong."

"Indeed, dear papa," said Mary, "Ridley said so too: only he could not bear to see his friends without food or a bed to sleep in, you know."

"God bless you, my love," said her father, kissing Mary fondly, "may you always be as true a friend to your brother, as you have been to-day. But now, Ridley, where are these silly children? At the Three Kings?"

"Yes, papa."

"Let us go directly, and bring them here, and send to inform Mr. Paget that his cousin Harrowby is safe with us." So saying, the Rector and his son walked quickly to the Three Kings. They learned that the boys had been there and ordered a bed; but their jaded miserable appearance, so inconsistent with their gentlemanly language and intonation, attracted the attention of the landlord; and after asking them a few questions, he thought it safest to give information at the Police Station, and had

induced them to go into the skittle ground at the back of his premises, where a game was being played, that he might keep an eye on them till the Police arrived. He was just about to despatch a messenger to the superintendent of Police, when Mr. Besborough and Ridley arrived.

Ridley was now allowed to return home, and the Rector walked into the group of skittle players, where the boys were standing, and taking them each by an arm, led them apart, and told them that it was his intention to convey them to his house, and that resistance would be silly, because ineffectual.

Both boys knew enough of Mr. Besborough to be perfectly sure he would carry out his purpose. They yielded sullenly to necessity, knowing their fate was sealed. They were ‘swells’ no longer! only naughty little boys, detected in a futile attempt to run away from home!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WORD IN SEASON.

As soon as Mr. Besborough had lodged his young companions in safety, he sent to his wife, begging her to come to him.

The news which she heard when she came to Holbein House, gave her much concern ; she felt especially for the mother of Harrowby, whom she knew to be devotedly attached to her only child, and who was a woman whose principles would compel her to condemn the undutiful conduct of her child, while her heart was torn with anguish at the idea of the dangers he might encounter. Mrs. Besborough suggested the despatch of a message by telegraph to inform the parents of their sons' safety ; and Martha was accordingly sent to London on this errand. She was to call and let Mr. Paget, Harrowby's cousin, know that the boys had been found.

The unfortunate little culprits looked so truly wretched and weary, that Mrs. Besborough determined to send them to bed at once, more especially as her husband said he should not hold any conversation with them till Mr. Paget arrived. The boys' beds were given up to them, and little Bob went off to the nursery, which, truth to tell, was by no means disagreeable to him, 'cong him sleep so nice wive him own ingle bavy.'

As to the other two, they talked this affair over till they worked themselves up into an extraordinary state of excitement, going all through the details, only to recommence them as soon as ended ; their father and mother

began to find the hurried chatter very wearisome.

At length they agreed that it was time to go to bed. A couch had been made up on the sofa for Ridley, and he was to sleep in the little back room opening out of their usual sitting room.

Mrs. Besborough followed her little girl into her chamber to have a few words of conversation with her before saying good night.

"I am very much pleased by your conduct to-day, my Mary," said she, "you showed right principle in refusing to sanction the use of the housekeeping money for any purpose beside that for which it was intrusted to you ; and in providing refreshment for the poor children, and in giving up your own money for their relief, you showed kind womanly feeling. But, my darling, you must look at the affair in a wider light than it perhaps appears to you at present ; while I commend your behaviour as better than Ridley's, I wish to show you that this should not occasion any self-satisfaction to you. *You were not tempted, darling.*"

"Yes, mamma, I understand. If I had been in Ridley's place, and he in mine, very likely I should have done as he did."

"At least, Mary, you cannot say that you might not, since you have not had the trial."

"Ridley is wiser than I am, I know. But

it made him so unhappy to see the boys that he wanted very very much to help them."

"Yes; that is exactly the case, my darling. Ridley was tempted by actually seeing and conversing with his daily companions. You sitting here quietly at your drawing, had nothing to disturb your judgment, and were therefore able to see the right more clearly than your brother.

"It is in such cases, my Mary, that a good right-minded woman may often prove an invaluable friend to a brother or a husband; probably he is as you say, wiser than herself, and has quite as good principles, but his feelings may, on some occasion, become so excited by being mixed up in stirring scenes, that he may be liable to allow them to overpower his judgment.

"An affectionate sister or wife may then perhaps have the opportunity of strengthening him by a gentle word of counsel. How great should be our thankfulness, Mary, if our LORD GOD permits us to fulfil this blessed office of love.

"It should make us very humble when we think how weak we are, and how little worthy we too often prove ourselves of this blessed privilege.

"Now, good night, my dearest, and GOD'S blessing be with you, sleeping and waking."

CHAPTER XV.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REALITY AND ANTICIPATION.

MR. PAGET arrived at eleven o'clock, and finding the boys were asleep, only stayed a few minutes to make his acknowledgments to his friends for their services to them, and then went to the Three Kings for the night. He was to breakfast with them early next day, and then take the boys home to their parents.

When nurse went to call Sainsworthy and Harrowby next morning, she found them so stiff and so foot-sore, that they were scarcely able to get up. Their feet were blistered all over—they had neither stockings nor waist-coats, and they did not seem to have had the comfort of soap and water since they left home. They looked more like wretched children out of a back court in London than the cherished sons of men in prosperous circumstances.

She bathed their poor little feet and administered a plentiful application of soap and warm water, and having replenished their apparel from Ridley's wardrobe, had the satisfaction of restoring them to a more decent appearance by the time Mr. Paget joined them.

They were then desired to relate all that had

befallen them since they parted from their parents.

It appeared that both boys had been idle and indisposed to work fairly at school. They had unluckily formed an acquaintance since they went home, with a lad who had made one voyage in a merchantman, from whom they had picked up the notion, that life on board ship was jollier than life at school ; they had in consequence determined to run away, and, if possible, get on board one of the ships then about to be sent out to the Crimea.

Four days since, Harrowby's father gave him a ten pound note and two sovereigns to pay a bill for him, and the opportunity to abscond seemed at length to have arisen. He immediately sought Sainsworthy ; and the two children proceeded to the railway station, and taking second-class tickets, started on their adventures.

On their arrival in London, they went to a public house near the station, where they supped and slept, and next morning after breakfast they proceeded to the docks to make inquiry about ships. Here they were soon beset by the idle dissolute people with whom that neighbourhood abounds, and were made to treat them with beer, gin, and tobacco, as the price of pretended information and assistance.

All this made the poor children wretchedly

ill, for it was a good joke to such companions to entice them to smoke and drink. They were put to bed at a low public house where the carousal had been held, and a man who pretended to be their 'good friend' told them to give him their ten pound note to get changed, 'as they must in course pay their way like swells,' and all the rest of the money they had about them when they started was gone. The man returned almost immediately and gave them five sovereigns, promising to bring the others presently. He never came back; and in the morning when they got up and went to the bar to ask for him, the landlord declared there had never been such a person at his house as the man they described!

They requested to have some breakfast, and were bidden to show that they had money to pay for it; but directly they tendered one of the sovereigns, it was declared to be a bad one, and they were seized, and rudely handled under pretence of searching for more counterfeit coin. The other four sovereigns were, as may be anticipated, no better than that already examined, and the people frightened them almost out of their wits, by threatening to give them in charge to a policeman for offering bad money.

After allowing them time to become tho-

roughly alarmed, the man proposed to let them go, on condition of their giving up their waist-coats and stockings to pay for their bed and breakfast, and the boys were glad to escape on any terms.

Too much terrified by their experience of the kind of usage likely to be met with in that region, to remain a moment longer than they could help, the boys left the docks without having gained any intelligence respecting the chance of getting on board ship, and they wandered about London very disconsolate and comfortless for the rest of the day. In the evening they went to a pastry cook's where they were known and obtained a large bag of buns 'on tick' as they called it. As they came out of the shop they just missed one of the masters of Archbishop Laud's school (of which they, as well as Ridley, were scholars), and they were so alarmed by this circumstance that they forthwith turned their faces towards Princes Green, and sought shelter in the fields where they had often gone with Ridley Besborough to play, on half holidays. It seemed they had not had any food excepting the buns since the morning before last, until Ridley met them.

"And where did you sleep the night before last?" asked Mr. Paget.

"Out under a hedge!" replied Harrowby, in the tone of one cruelly injured, "we had no money, and a man at another public house we went to would not trust us for a bed."

"A good judge of character he was, you must admit," said Mr. Besborough.

"I don't call it sleeping," said Sainsworthy, "I'm sure I couldn't sleep, it was so cold, and so miserable."

"Many a better fellow than you, my boy, lay under the curtain of the summer sky, I'll be bound," said the rector, "and that not because he had thrown away the blessings of home, but because he had not a home to go to. Now, do be candid, and tell us how much *enjoyment* you have got out of this affair."

"Why, not much," said Harrowby. "At first it was jolly, coming up by rail, which I always like very much, and being in London quite by ourselves, and meaning to have a lark. And then I thought we should have been sure to get berths on board ship directly, as Jem Morton said we should. And I thought it would all have been quite different."

"So I suppose," said the rector quietly.

"We meant to have gone to the play every night till we went on board," said Sainsworthy, "and to have had capital tucks out."

"Instead of creeping about hungry and thirsty, ashamed to look anybody in the face,

and very uncomfortable for want of clean linen and waistcoats, eh ?”

“ Well ; I recommend you to accept the comforts your parents provide for you in future,” said Mr. Paget. “ One thing I beg you to understand ; you, Harrowby, will not return to my house. I could not be responsible for you, nor should I have any pleasure in seeing you at my table after such conduct as you have been guilty of. It will take time before you can regain the confidence of your friends. At present, you have not the position of gentlemen either. Truthfulness is the first and most essential quality of a gentleman ; it is one to which neither of you can lay claim.”

Immediately after breakfast, Mr. Paget and his young charges were to depart, as it was decided to send them under the care of a trustworthy servant of Mr. Paget’s to Esherby, by the earliest train they could reach. Mrs. Harrowby was seriously ill in consequence of the alarm and anxiety she had endured on account of her son, and the best medicine for her sickness would be the sight of the truant.

When Harrowby heard of his mother’s illness his spirits were completely overcome ; he burst into tears and expressed the deepest contrition for his misconduct. His only desire was to reach his mother ; and he urged their going off for London without a moment’s

delay. It would have been impossible to find a more miserable child than that poor little boy on that bright September morning !

It was a relief to all parties when a cab was procured, and Mr. Paget and his prisoners set off for London.

CHAPTER XVI.

‘MAD DOG ! MAD DOG !!’

THE holidays were now drawing to a close ; there remained only five days before the Besboroughs were to return to London.

Grandpapa had of course heard the story of Sainsworthy and Harrowby’s performances, and was excessively disgusted by the affair.

“ My dears,” said he, “ I can excuse a folly or two in a boy now and then ; or it may be a trifle of idleness—you can’t put old heads on young shoulders—and for my part I should be uncommon sorry to see them there—but stealing and deceit are so unworthy of Christian children I’m sick to hear of it. God bless my soul ; did they ever learn their catechism ? Don’t talk any more about them, pray don’t.”

This took place while Bob was gone to get his hat one morning, when Mr. Chillingworth

called to take his little favourite out for a walk. They went up the road towards London, as the old gentleman wanted to procure some cabbage seed from a shop in that direction.

As the pair were on their return, they came up to a man grinding a hand-organ.

By his side was a stand with a tray on the top of it, upon which he put a small monkey, just as Bob and his grandpapa reached the spot where he was standing. Both were disposed to remain and observe the antics of the little creature.

The monkey was dressed very correctly after the portraits of Dame Hubbard, which are such favourites in most nurseries. She had on a petticoat of blue cloth, and a scarlet jacket trimmed with tarnished silver cord; a high crowned hat was on her head, and under her arm she carried a broom.

After looking round upon the spectators in a sharp cunning way, the Dame began to sweep the tray with infinite energy; when she had done this to her own contentment she threw down the broom, and the man then put the partner for whom her platform had been so carefully prepared, thereon. This gentleman was a small dog, habited as a Greenwich Pensioner, and at the word of command he advanced to the Dame, on his hind legs, presenting his hands to his fair partner, who clasping

them in her own, assisted him to preserve his upright attitude, while she and he performed a most frolicsome jig, to the tune of an inspiring polka.

The contrast between the monkey's excessively old-looking wizened little face, and old-fashioned costume, and her extraordinarily agile movements was very droll, and shouts of laughter from the bystanders showed how her performance was admired.

Completely absorbed by this amusing spectacle, and their ears filled with the sound of the hand-organ, neither Bob nor his grandfather had perceived the approach of a crowd which was rapidly nearing them. Bob chanced to turn his head just in time to see a huge dog tearing down the path, followed by a crowd of men and boys armed with sticks and brickbats, and anything they could lay their hands on.

“Mad dog! mad dog!” shouted the crowd, and every one fled for his life.

Bob grasped his grandfather's hand with the instinct of his noble nature, and pulling the old man with his utmost strength, cried ‘run, granpapa,’ and made for the door of a public house near which they stood. A stick was hurled at the dog in the same instant by some one in the crowd and providentially knocked the rabid beast over, giving time for Bob to drag his grandfather within the door ere the

creature recovered itself and dashed along, coming head foremost against the door which had swung to after the old man and child.

Mr. Chillingworth was totally bewildered by Bob's sudden and powerful movements, and stood trembling and panting for breath, unconscious of what was passing around him. Bob however heard one horrid yell, and then a cry, "that's it, well done, Butcher Stanfield, you done it—he's dead!" and the gathering crowd sent up a loud shout of triumph, as the fearful animal gave a last struggle, and lay stretched in death across the threshold of the public house.

Bob's promptitude had saved himself and his grandfather from one of the most awful of catastrophes.

The hurry and agitation were too great for the old gentleman's strength; he fainted, and lay for a long time quite insensible. The people of the house offered all the assistance he required, and they despatched one messenger for Mrs. Besborough, whom they knew, and another for the nearest medical man.

In about an hour Mr. Chillingworth was able to be conveyed home, and when there, expressed himself very comfortable, "quite well," "well as ever he was in his life."

The effects of the shock were not so slight however, as the old man imagined. Towards

evening he became very unwell, and retired early to bed, whence he never rose again.

In the afternoon of the next day Mrs. Chillingworth insisted on being conveyed into the room where her husband lay, that she might partake with him of the Holy Communion, and she never left him again while in life. Strengthened by love, the feeble delicate old woman watched by her faithful partner during the hours of that long day and the succeeding night, and it was she who received his last sigh, she it was on whom his last glance rested ere his spirit took its flight, in the grey dawn of the following morning.

"They were lovely in their lives," and the union which had lasted nearly sixty years, was not likely to be long dissevered by death. They parted in the joyful hope of reunion in that blessed place,

"Where tears are wiped from every eye,
And sorrow is unknown."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE END.

THE death of Mr. Chillingworth made an alteration in the arrangements of his family; Mrs. Besborough claimed a promise made at

her marriage, that the survivor of her parents should come to her house to pass the remnant of their days; and the old lady was most willing to comply with the proposal.

To be under the roof of her only child had always seemed to her the most desirable of positions, but she would not gratify this inclination during the life of her husband, although the gentle old man often urged her to accept the offer their son-in-law made, to receive them both into his house. Mrs. Chillingworth would not consent to an arrangement which would deprive her husband of his much prized garden, and render it unfit for him to wander about unattended, as he could very safely do at Princes Green.

The children returned to London at the time originally intended, but Mrs. Besborough remained a few more days at the cottage to make the requisite arrangements for her mother's change of abode. On breaking up her little establishment, Mrs. Chillingworth gave to Lucy Chisel sufficient furniture for her own and her grandfather's rooms, and this made a very material difference in their comfort. A couple of unfurnished chambers were hired in a clean, decent neighbourhood for a very small rent, and the sum thus saved added greatly to their ease in housekeeping expenses; moreover the feeling of ownership increased Lucy's just

pride in the neatness and cleanliness of their dwelling.

The day on which grandmamma became an inmate of the Rectory house of SS. Tryphena and Tryphosa, was a "red letter day" in the Besborough calendar. Every body felt happy in the prospect of smoothing the down-hill path of life for this beloved friend; every one hoped that his individual efforts to promote peace and love throughout the family, would add to the comfort of the guest who trusted herself to their affectionate care.

Bob's feeling on the occasion was pretty much that of the whole family. "Him very glad poor dear old grandmamma come to live wive 'em, cong 'em take *such* care of her, dear good old sing."

One peep into the quiet square a few months later, shall close our acquaintance with the little Besboroughs for the present.

Autumn had already begun to tinge the trees with various hues before the holidays at Princes Green were ended, and it seemed no long time after the children returned to London, that winter came upon them with his biting winds, his driving showers, wrapping the earth in his snow mantle, and binding her rivers with his numbing frosts.

True the old fellow brought roaring fires, and Christmas trees, and twelfthnight cakes, and merry fireside games. But we must not pause to tell of these things, nor to talk of sliders, and skaters with rosy faces growing yet rosier in the brisk keen air of the Christmas holidays.

Spring is come at last, and the life of the world is renewed. Trees are putting forth delicate green shoots, and the grass is green and fresh under the feet. The little flower girls are chanting their pleasant cries, and tempting us to exchange our pennies for bundles of fragrant wall-flowers, and tiny bunches of violets, and bouquets of daffodil and narcissus. The children of the Rectory are chasing each other round the garden, and making the quiet square resound with their cheerful voices.

But on a sudden the game is stopped, and the whole party run joyfully towards the gate to welcome an arrival which seems to afford them especial satisfaction. It is grandmamma in a Bath chair, come to take her daily airing on the sunny side of the garden. She is drawn by the old sculptor, to whom the privilege of serving his child's benefactress affords the warmest pleasure. It fatigues him a little, but not injuriously, and no one thinks of suggesting that he should relinquish a task

which gratifies his affectionate, grateful heart, and is agreeable also to the dear old lady, who derives great pleasure from conversing with him. At the back of the chair to-day may be seen a pretty little smiling maiden, trim and neat in her straw bonnet, and her new cotton frock made all by herself and Mary Besborough; very few people would recognize in her Miss Chisel's small maid of all-work, whose marvellously dirty face, and ragged locks occasioned such surprise and concern to the young lodgers at Holbein House. Yet it is Lucy Chisel, come to spend the afternoon with the Rector's children, on occasion of her having gained her first prize for diligence and good conduct at the Sunday School of SS. Tryphena and Tryphosa.

Does anybody care to know what became of Miss Chisel?

A human being who neither loved nor was beloved, appeared to Mr. Besborough so pitiable an object, that he would not abandon this unhappy woman to the misery she had created for herself. He went several times to see her, notwithstanding she continued to repulse his kind offices with savage rudeness.

Early in the spring of this year, a severe attack of influenza brought Miss Chisel to

the brink of the grave, and then Lucy had contrived to establish herself as nurse, and had watched and tended her aunt with untiring care. Before the conclusion of the five weeks she passed with the sufferer, she had won on her to accept the ministration of Mr. Besborough, and as the light of Divine Truth dawned on the soul of Miss Chisel, the unloving heart enlarged, and the grasping hand relaxed ; and she had realized the beauty and holiness of that new Commandment which our Blessed LORD has left as His parting legacy to humanity—

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